THE HOLY MASS

POPULARLY EXPLAINED

BY THE

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY THE
REV. VINCENT GILBERTSON, O.S.B.

"Hoc facite in meam commemorationem"
(Do this for a commemoration of Me)
St. Luke xxii. 19

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IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE

OF THE

TRANSLATOR'S MOTHER

"She desired only to be remembered at Thy altar."

(St. Augustine's *Confessions*, bk. ix., ch. xiii.)

Nihil Obstat.

MANUEL J. BIDWELL,

CENSOR DEPUTATUS.

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THE HOLY MASS.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

BEFORE commencing our actual explanation of the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass, it will be convenient if we first gather together here some short notes on certain liturgical matters, which will help the reader to a better understanding of our commentary.

We shall say a few words about the essence of sacrifice, and especially of that of the New Law; we shall treat of the authorized minister of this Sacrifice, of the place where it is offered, and of certain other matters relative to the Liturgy of the Mass.

§ 1. SACRIFICE.

The Liturgy is the official and public expression of the worship we pay to God. Now the heart of the Liturgy is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Hours of the Divine Office serve as a crown and an extension to it; the Sacraments themselves are most closely connected with it; it is the completion of all solemnities, so much so that it sums up in itself the worship which we owe to God (*cf.* St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, III., q. 65, a. 3; II., q. 85).

And first, what is sacrifice?

Sacrifice is the highest and the most complete act of the virtue of religion, for it is the most sublime expression of the respect that the creature owes to the Creator.

Sacrifice may be only interior. When outwardly ex-

pressed, which is the case we are studying here, it becomes the *natural* sign of the interior and spiritual sacrifice of the soul which offers itself to God in oblation. It is, moreover, this which makes exterior sacrifice, sacrifice in the strict sense of the word, for it expresses outwardly God's sovereign dominion over all His creation ; it thus gives up to God the whole man, both soul and body ; it is then the august manifestation of public worship.

An offering, therefore, to be a sacrifice, should fittingly express the interior acts of supreme worship rendered only to God ; sacrifice must be a *natural* sign.

Further, it should be a *conventional* sign. Indeed, in order that sacrifice may attain its end, it must depend finally upon God's acceptance, Who can modify, according to time and circumstances, the essential rite of the worship paid to Him. Hence the offerings of animals which were immolated under the Old Law are not made to-day, and that primarily because the reason for doing so no longer exists ; the Divine economy of supreme worship has changed under the New Testament.

We may thus define sacrifice : *Sacrifice in the strict sense of the word is :*

1. The *exterior* oblation of a *sensible* thing.

2. Its nature must fittingly express the act of supreme worship—that is, the acknowledgment of God's sovereign dominion over creatures.

3. The oblation, accompanied by its rites, must be accepted as such by God.

4. It must be offered to God alone by a lawful minister.

When one attempts to explain more fully the second element of this definition—that is, to determine what in the offering gives to it the character of an immolated victim,

by which condition supreme worship is expressed—one enters on a well-known theological controversy. The study of this matter is altogether beyond the range of our manual, and for that reason we designedly abstain from discussing it.

Sacrifice has four ends: It is offered to God—first, to adore Him; secondly, to thank Him for His favours; thirdly, to obtain the pardon of our sins; and, fourthly and finally, to ask for the graces we need. All these things express the sovereign dominion of God.

Such is the notion of sacrifice; the Christian religion was to have a sacrifice of its own.

This is the sublime Sacrifice of the Mass, the continuation of that of the Cross. The elements of sacrifice are found in it more completely than in any other. It is the exterior oblation of a sensible thing—that of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, under the visible species of bread and wine. The offering is presented to God alone, to the Father, Who is in Heaven. The Pontiff, its principal minister, is Christ Himself; the priest but lends Him his lips and hands. There is an essential rite expressing the act of supreme worship—namely, the mystery of Transubstantiation, wrought by the sacramental words. God desires this rite, for He Himself instituted it.

This Sacrifice is the same as that of the Cross, only offered in a different manner. On Calvary the Sacrifice was offered by Christ in a bloody manner; on the altar it is still Christ Who offers it by the ministry of His priests, but in an unbloody manner. The Sacrifice of the Cross merited our redemption; that of the altar applies the fruits of it to our souls.

It is hardly necessary, after what we have said, to insist upon the value of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It

is God Who immolates, God Who is immolated. What mysteries have we here! The value of this Sacrifice is infinite; its glory is reflected upon the Saints in Heaven; it benefits the dead as well as the living; it is the only holocaust truly worthy of the Lord, Who in it sacrifices Himself, "*always living to make intercession for us*" (Heb. vii. 25).

Ah, if we could but fully realize this gift of God!

§ 2. The Priest, Deacon, and Subdeacon.

The word *priest* is derived from the Latin *presbyter*, which in its turn comes from a Greek word signifying *an ancient, a wise man*, or *a person of dignity*. The wisdom, authority, and social office which honour the minister of God have rightly merited for him this name of *priest*. The expression, however, is vague; our tongue has no term to convey the profound sense of that other Latin word for priest, *sacerdos*. *Sacerdos* signifies *one who dispenses sacred things*, one who is made an intermediary between God and men: between God, from Whom he receives, and men, to whom he dispenses; between God, to Whom he offers up gifts, and men, who charge him to present them.

But this man, thus constituted between God and his fellow-creatures, is, and can only be, a substitute. There is, indeed, as the Apostle testifies, but one true and only Mediator: "*For there is one God,*" he writes, "*and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a redemption for all*" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). If Jesus is the only Mediator between God, His Father, and men, He is likewise the only Priest. On the other hand, if the minister of the altar is truly a mediator and truly a priest, as faith teaches us, he can be so only in virtue of a special delegation, given to him on the solemn day of his ordination. Considered as a private person, the priest is not

different from other men; yet, inasmuch as he is the minister of God, he represents Jesus Christ Himself, from Whom he derives all the power, the authority, and the efficaciousness of his mediation.

The liturgical rite for the consecration of priests is very instructive on this subject. A double power is conferred upon them—the one to be exercised upon the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the other upon His Mystical Body, which is the Church or the union of all the faithful. By the first power the priest is made a sacrificer, and by the second a judge; but both powers can operate only in the name of Christ.

Let us briefly recall the ceremonies of ordination. It takes place during Mass. The consecrating Bishop has carefully inquired as to the merits of him whom the Church presents. To the candidate he insists with force and unction upon the greatness of the charge of which a priest assumes the responsibility. The Adorable Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins, the whole celestial court, is invoked on behalf of the aspirant: "*Lord*," prays the Bishop, "*deign to bless, sanctify, and consecrate Thine elect*" (Roman Pontifical, *Ordination of Priests*).

Then the Levite advances, and the Bishop imposes in silence his hands upon his head. The assisting priests do likewise; then all together they extend their right hands over the future priest. This is a solemn moment, for it is then, while the Bishop prays, that there is infused into the deacon the sacerdotal grace; it is then that the Holy Spirit descends and reposes upon the head of him whom He has predestined from all eternity to this sublime vocation. Ah! if the heavens were now to open, as they did once by the Jordan, we should hear the voice of the Father proclaiming in favour of this new Christ: "*This is My*

beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17), for Jesus is born again and perpetuated in this new priest.

The Bishop clothes the ordinand with the sacerdotal vestments; he crosses the stole over his breast, a touching symbol of that Cross with which the Eternal Priest, Jesus Christ, was laden on the day of His sacrifice. He puts on him the chasuble, an emblem of love, a treasure so much needed by a priest.

The ordinand then presents his hands, and the Bishop anoints the palms by making a cross with the oil of catechumens from the thumbs to the index-fingers, at the same time saying: "*Lord, deign to consecrate and sanctify these hands by this unction and by our blessing, in order that whatever they shall bless may be blessed, and whatever they shall consecrate may be consecrated and sanctified in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Roman Pontifical, *Ordination of Priests*).

Then follows the tradition of the instruments. The Bishop makes the ordinand touch the chalice containing the wine and the paten on which lies the host, saying: "*Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate Mass for the living and the dead in the Name of the Lord.*" The Mass, which has been interrupted from the end of the *Tract* of the Epistle, is now resumed. After the Communion the Bishop lays his hands a second time on the new priest, saying: "*Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they shall be forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they shall be retained*" (John xx. 23). Unheard-of power! "*Who can forgive sins but God only?*" (Mark ii. 7). It is true, God alone can absolve a sinner, but it is because the priest has received the power of Jesus, Who is God, that he will in due time work this wonder.

The priest, then, is a consecrator, a judge, a depositary

of Divine power, a mediator between God and men, a visible representative of the "*Great Pastor of the sheep*" (Heb. xiii. 20). The priest is all this . . . "*I believe, Lord*" (Mark ix. 23).

As we shall frequently have to speak of the *deacon* and *subdeacon* in the course of this work, it will be well to say here a few words concerning them. *Deacon* and *subdeacon* are two words, derived from the Greek, meaning *ministers* or *servers*—that is, the assistants of the priest at the altar.

The *diaconate* and *subdiaconate* are two major and holy orders[1] of the Roman Church. The former has always been such, but the subdiaconate has only been considered a sacred order since the time of Innocent III.—that is, from the commencement of the thirteenth century. These orders are very ancient. The diaconate is of Divine institution; this is less certain with regard to the subdiaconate. The early Fathers mention and exalt the dignity of these orders.

The special office of the deacon is to sing the Gospel, and directly to assist the priest at the altar. In olden times, when there were fewer priests, deacons were entrusted with many other very high functions, which are nowadays reserved to priests; they used to baptize and distribute Holy Communion. The subdeacon sings the Epistle, and directly assists the deacon, and indirectly the priest, in all that regards the Holy Sacrifice.

The *vestments* peculiar to each are the stole and the dalmatic for the deacon, and the maniple and the tunic for the subdeacon. About these we shall say something later.

These two ministers of the priest, on account of their

[1] As is well known, the Roman Liturgy distinguishes seven orders, or degrees, leading to the priesthood. They are: Porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, and priest. The tonsure is not an order; it prepares for orders, making the layman an ecclesiastic and separating him from the world.

office, are invested with extraordinary dignity. They approach the nearest to the Holy of Holies, and at the altar they represent the faithful and respond in their name.

§ 3. The Sacerdotal Vestments.

What are the sacerdotal vestments? What is their origin? And what do they symbolize?

The vestments of the priest are: the birretta, the amice, the alb, the girdle, the maniple, the stole, and the chasuble.

The *birretta* is spoken of in the twelfth century, and the actual word *birretum* is met with in the thirteenth century; the actual shape of the birretta dates from the sixteenth century. The priest wears the birretta when leaving and returning to the sacristy, and when seated in the choir. All his ministers should do likewise.

The *amice*, from the Latin word *amicire*, *to cover*, is a linen cloth, with which the priest covers his neck and shoulders before putting on the alb.

The *alb*, from the Latin *alba* (*vestis*, understood) or *white vestment*, is a long white robe reaching to the feet; whence it is called by the Greeks *poderis*, from a word meaning *foot*.

The *girdle* is intended to fasten the alb, so that its fulness may not inconvenience the priest. The priest wears the *maniple* on his left arm, crosses the *stole* over his breast, and finally puts on the *chasuble* over the other vestments. The *tunic* is the vestment of the subdeacon, and the *dalmatic* that of the deacon.

As regards the origin of the sacred vestments, most of them were anciently common to ecclesiastics and lay-folk alike. Gradually, however, they passed into the exclusive use of the ministers of the altar.

The Church did not prescribe the *amice* until the eighth

century. For a long time it was worn over the alb, as the Ambrosian rite still orders.[1] The amice entirely covers the neck. One of the oldest mystical explanations of this custom is given by Amalar: "*Collum undique cingimus, quia vox in collo est*"—"We completely cover the neck, because the voice is in the neck" (Amalar, *De Eccles. Offic.*, Lit. ii., c. 17). Hence the formula used by the Bishop at the ordination of a subdeacon, when the amice is given: "*Receive the amice, the symbol of moderation in speech*" (Roman Pontifical). In some places, as early as the twelfth century, the amice was used to cover the head during a portion of the Holy Sacrifice, and for this reason it was later called, in liturgical symbolism, *galea salutis—the helmet of salvation* (*cf.* Rupert. Tuit., *De Divinis Officiis*, L. i., c. 19). From the commencement of this period until the sixteenth century amices fringed with gold and silver were in use.

The *alb* is a very early sacerdotal vestment. The children of Aaron were commanded by God to wear linen tunics. Among pagans, all who were clothed with any dignity, —priests in particular—used to wear the *alba vestis*. In the primitive Church the sacred ministers always wore it, even when not engaged in liturgical functions. The white robes worn by the neophytes, or newly baptized, during the Octave of Easter, and laid aside on the following Saturday—called for this reason *in albis*—were the same garments. *Ornamented albs* appear in the ninth century, and *albs of lace* in the seventeenth century.

The *girdle*, as we have said, was added from necessity. It symbolizes modesty, continency, and probity; of old it was considered a dishonour to be ungirded.

The name *maniple* is said to be derived from the Latin word *mappa*, or *mappula*, which means a *handkerchief*,

[1] The Liturgy of the Church of Milan, called "Ambrosian," because St. Ambrose, the Bishop of that city, considerably added to it.

napkin, or *small cloth*. Originally the maniple was held in the hand. At the Abbey of Cluny the altar-boys wore maniples. "At St. John's in Lyons the choristers sang the prophecies on Holy Saturday, holding the maniple in their left hand, between their fingers. It was originally their handkerchief, which they held ready for use if needed whilst reading the lessons, which were very long" (G. de Moléon, *Liturgical Journeys in France*, p. 63; Paris, 1718).

Later, the maniple became a costly serviette for presenting or receiving anything. It was folded over the left arm when not in actual use (Mgr. Duchesne, *Origins of Christian Worship*). In the twelfth century it became a distinctive badge of clerks in Holy Orders, and was henceforth worn only at Mass.

"The stole, during the first eight centuries, was called the *orarium* (from the Latin *os*, "the face"), and was originally a piece of fine linen used by people of dignity for wiping the face. The napkin was especially convenient for public speakers. On this account it became in the Church an ornament for Bishops, priests, and deacons" (Le Brun, *Explication des Prières de la Messe*). It has been such since the fourth century. There is reason to think that those who gave the name *stole*, *stola*, to the *orarium*, did so because they took it for a remnant —that is, the border or orphrey—of a long garment open in front, whereas it simply replaced the large handkerchief which used to hang round the neck (Le Brun).

"The deacon wears the *stole* over the left shoulder. In primitive times it hung straight down in front and behind. Later, doubtless for the purpose of better fixing it, the two sides were brought together under the right arm" (Desloge, *Studies on the Meaning of Liturgical Things*). The priest crosses the stole at Mass, whilst the Bishop allows the two arms of it to fall "straight down from the neck," because of his pectoral cross, as some think. Per-

haps it is more correct to say that Bishops still wear the stole in the ancient and primitive way.

The Latins give to the *chasuble* the name of *casula, a small house ;* the Greeks that of *planeta, an object not fixed,* and *turning easily.* As a matter of fact, the primitive chasuble rather resembled *a small house* in which the priest stood enclosed. Its circular form allowed it to be easily turned round the neck. In order to have his hands free, the priest raised the chasuble at the sides, and at the Elevation the deacon lifted it up behind to assist him in his movements. This rubric is still observed, although the reason for it no longer exists. Since the eighth century the chasuble has been cut out over the arms, imperceptibly attaining its present form, which reminds us very little of the original (*cf.* Callewaert, *The Study and the Spirit of the Liturgy,* p. 20).

The word *tunic* is a generic term, which was of old given also to other vestments besides that peculiar to the subdeacon. It merely denotes nowadays the garment worn by the latter. It is a long robe, with rather narrow and closed sleeves, worn over the alb. The use of the tunic dates back to the sixth century, but it must be said that it was not then universal. It was not until much later that it was prescribed in the Latin Church. It symbolizes joy—it is an *indumentum lætitiæ,* " a garment of joy," as the Liturgy calls it.

The *dalmatic* is to-day the same, or almost the same, as the tunic. This robe originated in Dalmatia, whence its name ; it was probably introduced into Rome in the second century. It was longer than the tunic, and very ample. The sleeves were also wider, but likewise closed up. Later, the sleeves of the dalmatic and tunic were slit. This is the form now in use in most of our churches.[1] These

[1] This remark chiefly applies to churches in France and Belgium. NOTE TO ENGLISH EDITION.

sleeves were short, not reaching below the elbow. The dalmatic was worn over the tunic—a custom still observed by the Bishop when he celebrates pontifically. Emperors even have worn this vestment. As a sacred vestment, the dalmatic was originally reserved to Bishops. St. Sylvester, in the fourth century, gave it to the deacons of Rome, and by degrees it became universally the vestment proper to deacons. In the Liturgy it is called the garment of justice—*dalmatica justitiæ*.

A few words more concerning the symbolism of the sacerdotal vestments.

The Church instructs us on this subject through the prayers which she bids priests to say while they are vesting. As we have said, the priest at the altar is the substitute of Jesus Christ. In order to appear worthily in the presence of God the Father and before the heavenly court, his soul ought to be adorned with the virtues of Him Whom he represents. Whilst he is vesting he begs from the Lord the virtues which these vestments call to mind. The amice is the helmet of salvation, which renders him invulnerable in his combats with the infernal enemy; the alb is the emblem of innocence; the girdle represents chastity, victorious over carnal passions; the maniple symbolizes the ardent zeal of priests; the stole is figurative of the stainless robe which is given at Baptism, and which is the pledge of immortality; the chasuble recalls the sweet yoke, the light burden of the law of Christ and the Cross, by which alone we are saved.

§ 4. The Liturgical Colours.

The Church did not originally fix on any special colours for the vestments, as is still the case in the Eastern Church. It was only towards the twelfth century that there emanated

from ecclesiastical authority definite directions on this matter.

The colours recognized by the Roman Liturgy are: white, red, green, purple, black, and rose. The symbolical sense which these colours receive in Holy Scripture has also determined the circumstances in which our rubrics prescribe them.

White denotes joy and innocence, the glory of the Angels, the triumph of the Saints, as also the Divinity and victory of the Redeemer. This colour is assigned in the Roman Church to feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ, such as Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, and the feast of the Sacred Heart; to feasts of the Blessed Virgin; to the feast of All Saints, and to all feasts of Pontiffs, Doctors, Confessors, and Virgins—in general, of all those Saints who were not martyrs.

Red symbolizes, on account of its brightness, fire, and, of its colour, blood. It is used for the feasts of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Cross, the Passion, and the Martyrs, including the Apostles.

Green, the colour of spring, is the symbol of hope; it is employed during the period which in liturgical mysticism signifies *the pilgrimage to Heaven*—that is, the season after the Epiphany and Whit Sunday.

Purple was anciently regarded as a colour signifying royalty, power, high dignity, and wealth. The Church has reversed this symbolism by substituting for it that of penance, humiliation, and prayer in time of affliction; for is it not by these we are truly enriched and exalted? She employs this colour during Advent, Septuagesima and Lent, on Ember days, Vigils, and Rogation days, as also at the three solemn liturgical blessings occurring in the course of the year—namely, those of Candlemas day, Ash Wednesday, and Palm Sunday.

Black typifies the power which rises up against God—the action of Satan and his victories. It is used on Good Friday and in Offices of the Dead; for the fallen Angel was the author of our death, and that of Christ was necessary to save us from the consequences of ours.

In some churches *rose* is used twice in the year—namely, on *Gaudete Sunday*, the third Sunday in Advent, and on *Lætare Sunday*, the fourth Sunday in Lent. The origin of this practice is that on *Lætare Sunday* the Pope blessed the rose which he was going to send to one or other of the Christian Princes. The same colour was afterwards used on *Gaudete Sunday*, which has certain liturgical analogies with that of *Lætare*.

Such are the colours of the vestments used by the Roman Church; she does not sanction any others. The Sacred Congregation of Rites has forbidden the use of vestments which exhibit other colours than the one prescribed, unless this latter is the predominant one. The Congregation has also forbidden the use of yellow and blue. *Cloth of gold* is tolerated, and, according to the custom in Rome, it may serve for either white, red, or green. Cloth of silver may serve for white. We should note here that it is not the cross on the chasuble or the trimmings of the tunic which determine their colour; but it is the groundwork of the vestment.

Finally, let us remark that what has been said about the liturgical colours does not concern only the sacerdotal vestments, but all the ornaments used for worship, as the *antependium* or tapestry hung before the altar, and the *canopy* or tabernacle veil, etc.

§ 5. The Altar.

What is the altar? How many kinds of altars are there? What does the altar represent?

Altar is derived from the Latin word *altare*, which means

an *elevated object—alta res;* it is a table raised above the ground, on which sacrifice is offered.

The Church was to have her own altar—an altar all the more sacred that the Victim immolated thereon is God.

There are two kinds of altars—the fixed and the portable altar. The first is a large stone slab laid on a massive base of the same material, with which it forms one immovable and consecrated whole. The second is simply a small stone slab, large enough, however, to hold the chalice and host; it is let into a table of wood or stone; only the small stone slab is consecrated; it may be removed from one table to another.

There are generally several altars in a church, the principal one being the high-altar, usually immovable; at this the ceremonies are by preference performed. In the first ages side-altars did not exist; they were erected later, when there was introduced the custom of celebrating several Masses a day in the same church.

Of whatever material the altar may be constructed, that part on which the chalice and host are placed must be of stone. A crucifix must be placed on it, to remind the priest and the faithful of the Passion of Jesus Christ, which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass mystically renews. A blessed candle should be on each side of the cross in honour and veneration of the adorable Victim. Three steps, as a rule, lead up to the high-altar, symbolizing, according to liturgists, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which conduct us to Jesus Christ.

The altar, in fact, represents Jesus Christ, as the Bishop informs the subdeacon at his ordination, and as is shown by the rite for the consecration of altars. The thought of the Sacrifice of the Cross is predominant throughout these ceremonies, in which we may count nearly two

hundred signs of the Cross. The altar is of stone, since stone is a figure of Jesus Christ—"*the Corner-stone*" of the Church, as St. Paul calls Him (Eph. ii. 20). Five crosses are engraved on this stone, to represent the five wounds of our Saviour. It is purified by numerous ablutions, for it symbolizes the eternal High-Priest, Who, as the Apostle tells us, is "*holy, innocent, and undefiled*" (Heb. vii. 26). It is anointed many times with the oil of catechumens and with holy chrism, as it is an emblem of Him concerning Whom it is written: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me*" (Luke iv. 18). In the sepulchre of this stone repose some relics of Saints, one of which at least ought to be that of a Martyr. It is well known that in the primitive Church the Holy Mysteries were celebrated on the tombs of the Martyrs.

The altar, then, represents Jesus Christ; it is a figure of God dwelling in the midst of His people.

§ 6. The Altar Linen.

We reckon as altar linen the altar cloths, the corporal, the pall, and the purificator; the three last are called sacred, as they are used immediately for the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass.

All these cloths must be made from flax or hemp; there is a strict law of the Church condemning the use of cotton.

Until the ninth century the cloths covering the altar were of silk, or even cloth of gold or silver. Pope Leo IV. ordered them to be of linen. There must be three cloths covering the altar—one is not enough—in case an accident should occur, such as the spilling of the Precious Blood. One of these must hang down on both sides of the altar, and touch the ground; it is sufficient that the other two should cover the consecrated stone.

The *corporal* is a small linen cloth which the priest spreads on the altar, and on which is wrought the consecration of the sacred species. It is so called on account of its immediate contact with the adorable Body of Jesus Christ. In olden times the corporal was much larger; this was necessary, owing to the number and size of the offerings brought by the faithful to be consecrated.

The *pall* is a small square piece of linen used for covering the chalice. Formerly there was no special pall, the chalice being covered with the ends of the corporal, which were folded back over it. When the corporal was made smaller, another cloth was needed for covering the chalice—namely, the pall. Let us notice that, in conformity with the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, the portion of the pall directly touching the chalice must be of flax or hemp; the upper portion may, however, be of silk and be embroidered, but it must not be black, nor have any emblem of death upon it.

The *purificator* is a linen cloth which serves to wipe the chalice. The ancient writers do not mention it. The Cistercian monks used to purify the chalice with a cloth hung at the Epistle corner of the altar. This was afterwards detached, and made an indispensable adjunct of the chalice. We must also mention the finger-cloth which the priest uses to wipe his fingers at the "*Lavabo*" of the Mass.

The cloths covering the altar, and the corporal and the pall must be blessed by the Bishop or by a priest delegated for this purpose. The purificator may, but need not, be blessed; the finger-cloth is not blessed.

The sacred ministers only are allowed to wash the corporal, the pall, and the purificator; no one else, without permission, may touch these cloths once they have been blessed.

The mystical meaning attached to the altar linen is drawn from the material of which they are made. These cloths are of linen, in order the better to represent the winding-sheet in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the Body of our Lord; they also receive the same adorable Body immolated on our altars.

Their whiteness teaches us that if our souls desire to receive worthily "*this Bread which he that eateth shall live for ever*" (John vi. 59), they ought likewise to unfold and present themselves without spot before the eyes of the Divine Lamb.

§ 7. The Church Candle.

What is the church candle? The French word *cierge*,[1] from the Latin *cera*, meaning *wax*, denotes a *wax candle*. The word *cierge*, therefore, rightly expresses the material from which the church candle is made, and which alone may be used in its manufacture; compounds of grease, stearine, or purified tallow are not true church candles, and their use is forbidden by the Church.

Church candles are either white or yellow. The latter are made from yellow wax, just as it is extracted from the beehive, whence they derive their aromatic odour. The former are made from the same wax, which has been purified and bleached. The yellow candles are only used at services for the dead and in certain functions of Holy Week.

What is the liturgical use of the candle?

It is used in nearly all ceremonies—at Mass, in the administration of the Sacraments, and at processions. We

[1] Our English word *candle* is derived from the Latin *candela*, which may be used indifferently for a wax or tallow candle; hence it does not so correctly describe the church candle as does the French *cierge*.—Note to English Edition.

must be content here with determining its use at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In general, the number of candles varies according to the solemnity. For Low Mass the rubrics require at least two candles ; in the Roman Liturgy a third may be lit from the *Sanctus* to the *Communion ;* this is placed near the altar, on the Epistle side where the server is. This custom has disappeared in some places. At Solemn Mass—that is, when the celebrant officiates, assisted by deacon and subdeacon—six candles are lit ; and if the Bishop pontificates in person, a seventh is added,[1] the Church symbolizing thereby the seven gifts which the Holy Ghost bestowed upon him at his episcopal consecration, when he received the fulness of the priesthood, together with the power of conferring the seven Sacraments. In the ancient Liturgy of the Gauls as many as seven candles were carried at the procession of the Gospel, when the deacon went to the ambo to sing it ; thus, at St. Martin's in Tours, at Rheims, and elsewhere, feasts on which three, five, or seven candles were lit for the singing of the Gospel were called Feasts of Three, Five, or Seven Candlesticks, as the case might be.

It should be remarked that the candlesticks must be placed on both sides of the crucifix, either on the consecrated table or on the reredos, and not on the steps of the altar or elsewhere.

And what does the candle signify ?

The candle, like the altar upon which it stands, is a symbol of Jesus Christ. Has He not called Himself "*the Light of the World*" (John viii. 12) ? And is He not

[1] The origin of this rubric is to be found in the ancient Papal Mass. When the Pope solemnly celebrated Mass of the *Stations*, all the Roman clergy assisted at it. As the city of Rome was divided into *seven regions*, each of these was represented by an acolyte, who bore a candle. In addition to these candles, there were carried, as is still the practice nowadays, seven candelabra at the Papal Mass (see *Collationes Brugenses*, xiv. 670).

"*the Light that shineth in darkness*" (John i. 5)? The candle gives light and warmth, and Jesus Christ dispels the darkness of our ignorance, and enkindles in our hearts true love. The Eternal Light one day became incarnate, and the candle reminds us of this mystery. St. Anselm very beautifully says: "The wax produced by the virginal bee is a symbol of the Flesh of Christ born of the Virgin Mary; the wick is a symbol of His Soul; the flame, a symbol of His Divinity."

When, then, we see these candles being gradually consumed upon our altars, let us recall to our minds Him of Whom they are the figure. Let us contemplate in these rays of light the rays of Jesus Christ, Whose countenance shines in Heaven "*as the sun in its full strength*" (Apoc. i. 16); let us reanimate our faith in Him Who comes to be immolated on the terrestrial altar, in "*the Lamb which was slain from the beginning of the world*" (Apoc. xiii. 8), and Who is "*the glory and lamp of the celestial city*" (Apoc. xxi. 23). For our part, let us both be and "*walk as children of the light*" (Eph. v. 8), for that is what the candle invites us to do.

§ 8. The Incense.

Incense is a resinous substance extracted from a tree that grows in Palestine and Arabia. In Latin there are two words for it: (1) *thus*, derived from a Greek verb which means *to perfume;* and (2) *incensum*, from a Latin verb signifying *to burn*, whence the word *incense*. We are able to unite these two meanings and say that incense is a perfume destined to be consumed in honour of God.

The thurible is a liturgical instrument in which burns the fire that is to dissolve and devour this perfume. Originally the thurible was merely a large vase, without chains, filled

with live coals. These perfuming vases were carried by the acolytes *ad nares hominum, to the noses of the assistants,* as used to be said; the latter stretched forth their hands, thus gathering and drawing to themselves the fragrant fumes of the incense. By degrees these censers were lessened in size, and afterwards suspended by chains, thus forming our actual thurible.

The Liturgy makes frequent use of incense. Holy Church uses it in almost all her ceremonies—at Solemn Mass, at the Offices of Lauds and Vespers—and also in her blessings: among others, the three great liturgical blessings of the year—that of candles on Candlemas day, of ashes on Ash Wednesday, and of palms on Palm Sunday. We must also mention its use at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. We shall speak in the proper place of the incensing of the altar at Solemn Mass.

Incense has likewise its symbolism, for this perfume, used so often by the Church, should unceasingly remind us that we ought to be "*the good odour of Christ*" (2 Cor. ii. 15), and to spread everywhere around us the knowledge and love of God.

We can ascend even higher, and find a more beautiful interpretation of incense. With the well-beloved Apostle in his vision at Patmos, let us contemplate in Heaven the Angels swinging their golden censers before the throne of the Lamb. These censers, this Prophet says, were "*full of odours,*" and these odours he reveals to us were nothing less than "*the prayers of the Saints*" (Apoc. v. 8). Incense, then, is symbolical of prayer, and as it ascends to Heaven it calls to our minds that our prayer should be pure, fervent, and scented with the sweet odour of our virtues.

§ 9. The Church.

The Christian religion has its Sacrifice; we have seen what it is and what is its value. It has also its priests to offer the Sacrifice; but where do they offer it? They offer it in a church.

What is a church?

The word *church*[1] is equivalent to the Latin *ecclesia*, which comes from the Greek; it signifies *assembly*, or *union of the faithful;* in this sense we say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." This name has passed from the assemblies to the places where they are held. According to this new sense—and it is the only one with which we are here concerned—a church is an edifice wherein Christians assemble in order to render to God the worship due to Him —that is, public worship, or, in other words, the Liturgy.

The church is the Christian's house, in which he adores, returns thanks, atones, and petitions.

The church is the priest's house, in which he sacrifices, pardons, and teaches.

The church is God's house; from this fact it derives all its dignity and prerogatives.

Finally, the church is specially destined to be the house of the altar; it is an edifice built to contain the altar.

The ritual for the construction and for the consecration or dedication of a church admirably expounds these thoughts.

When the Bishop lays the first stone of a church, and invokes upon it the blessing of God, the Liturgy carefully

[1] The English word *church* is said by etymologists to be derived from the Greek κυριακός (*kuriakós*), meaning *belonging to the Lord* (*cf.* 1 Cor. xi. 18-22). Hence we have the Anglo-Saxon *cyrice* or *cirice*, the Scotch *kirk*, and the German *Kirch*. All the Latin languages derive their words signifying the same idea from the Greek ἐκκλησια (*ecclesia*).—Note to English Edition.

reminds us that this stone is an image of Jesus Christ, "*the chief Corner-stone*" (Eph. ii. 20), which sustains the edifice of the great house or family of God.

When the new temple is consecrated the Liturgy exhausts the riches of its rites and the enthusiasm of its gladness, for it is engaged in preparing a dwelling for the Divine Guest of the Tabernacle.

In the first place, there are long purifications. The outside of the walls is sprinkled with holy water as the procession passes three times round the building. The doors of the church are then opened to the King of Glory, to the strong and mighty God. And then the inside of the walls of the temple is three times purified by the Bishop; next, its flooring at the north, south, east, and west. It is then time to bring in the relics of the Saints, who are to form the court of the God of Heaven. They cross the threshold of the door, which the Bishop has just anointed with holy chrism, and are placed in the sepulchre of the consecrated altar, where they are to repose till the end of time. Twelve columns of the temple—figures of the twelve Apostles, the pillars of our faith—are also anointed with holy oil.

The church is exorcised, purified, and consecrated; the prince of darkness has been driven from it for ever; Christ alone will henceforth reign there: "*How terrible is this place! this is no other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven*" (Gen. xxviii. 17).

Let us Christians, then, go to this place of prayer; for there, more than in any other place, will God accept our homage and hear our prayers.

Moses, prostrate before the burning bush, heard the voice of God saying to him: "*Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*" (Exod. iii. 5).

God cries aloud to us, to us Christians: "Purify your hearts; free yourselves from the bonds of self-love; shake off the dust of the earth; tear yourselves away from the distractions of the world; enter with fear into the sanctuary of your God, and recollect yourselves in His Presence."

THE HOLY MASS

POPULARLY EXPLAINED

The Mass in General.

According to the opinion of many liturgists, the word "Mass," from the Latin *missa* and *missio*, owes its origin to an expression formerly used to dismiss the congregation at the end of the Sacrifice: *Ite, missa est*—that is, *Go; you are dismissed.*

In the early ages the Mass bore different names, such as *the Breaking of Bread, Communion, the Last Supper, the Oblation, the Sacrifice, Dominicum, the Action, Synaxis*, or Assembly, and, finally, the *Liturgy*, that is, Public Worship.

This Public Worship, though always essentially the same, has only by degrees undergone its actual arrangement. The Eastern Church has still several different rites for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. There is the Liturgy of St. James, and those of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, of St. Basil, and of St. John Chrysostom, as also the beautiful Armenian Liturgy. The Western Church had also several rites. There was the *ancient* Roman Rite, and the Gallican Rite, the ancient Liturgy of the Gauls, from which were derived the Milanese or Ambrosian Liturgy and the Mozarabic Rite of Spain.[1] The Roman Church follows nowadays the *new* Roman Rite, which was made of obliga-

[1] *The Mozarabic Liturgy* was anciently followed in Spain by those Christians who lived in the eighth century, under the yoke of the Moors. They were called Mozarabs, or Mixtarabs, on account of their mixing with the Arabs.

tion by St. Pius V. in the sixteenth century, and which is only a modification of that of the *ancient* Roman. We shall confine ourselves to the study of this, which is our own modern rite.

We must first distinguish between two kinds of Masses—namely, the *Sung* or *Solemn Mass* and the *Low Mass*.

Originally Mass was always sung. The celebration of Low Masses dates back only to the eighth or ninth century, when private chapels, and consequently altars, were multiplied in churches. Owing to the number of Masses, it became impossible to celebrate them with the usual solemnity, and so this privilege was reserved to the Mass celebrated at the high-altar, at which the deacon and subdeacon assisted. It is the Solemn Mass that is explained in this work.

"It may, however, be said that all the elements of the Solemn Mass, if deprived of their solemnity, are found, as it were, accumulated and condensed in the Low Mass. . . . As to the ceremonies, we find them much reduced in Low Mass; but as to the words they are integrally the same, with only this difference—that those passages sung at a High Mass are said in an undertone at Low Mass" (Desloge).

In olden times Mass was said only on Sunday, the day of rest, when all the faithful gathered together for prayer. Soon, however, it was celebrated also on Wednesday and Friday; then also on Saturday. Finally, each day of the week was honoured by the Holy Oblation. Nowadays Good Friday is the only day on which Mass is forbidden; then, however, is celebrated what is called *the Mass of the Presanctified*[1]—a custom which dates back at least to the fourth century.

[1] The Mass of *the Presanctified* is so called because the priest offers up at the altar and consumes at the Communion the Eucharistic Species which were consecrated the day, or even some days, before. In this Mass, then, he does not consecrate at all.

For a very long time priests were allowed to celebrate several times on the same day. It is known that as late as the eighth century Pope Leo III. was wont to offer up the Holy Sacrifice seven or eight times a day. The dearth of priests and even private devotion authorized this custom. The only remaining traces of this practice are the three Masses that every priest is allowed to say on Christmas day, as also the faculty given to certain priests of duplicating on Sundays—that is, of celebrating twice.

We must also observe that it was formerly the practice for several priests to celebrate together. On great feasts they used to proceed to the cathedral church, and there, conjointly with the Bishop, offer up the same Sacrifice. Even to this day the Greeks concelebrate in this manner. The Latin Church observes this rite at the ordination of priests, when all the ordinands, in union with the consecrating Bishop, say the same Mass.

Finally, let us remark that a priest is never allowed to celebrate alone. He ought to be assisted by a server, who, properly, should be a cleric—that is, one belonging to the clergy. Formerly the server was always a deacon; this word, in fact, means server. The scarcity of clerics eventually prevented the observance of this rubric. Women are forbidden to serve Mass; yet, in the case of pressing necessity, they may answer, but only at a distance, outside the sanctuary, and without serving directly at the altar.

In addition to general notions about the Holy Mass, we must here add certain remarks with regard to two ceremonies which are performed only at High Mass on Sunday; I mean the *Blessing of Water* and the *Asperges*.

The *Blessing of Water* is a very ancient liturgical ceremony. Even as early as the second century, Tertullian

speaks of water made holy by the invocation of God. The most solemn blessing of water, as is well known, was that of the baptismal fonts, which still takes place on Holy Saturday and on the Eve of Pentecost. On these days some of the faithful, moved by piety, used to carry away some of this holy water, before the chrism was mixed with it, to sprinkle their houses and fields therewith. This practice soon became general, and then, as the water blessed on these two great feasts was found insufficient for the devotion of the people, some authors think there was introduced the ceremony of blessing water on every Sunday, on which day, as we have seen, all the people assembled together for prayer. Charlemagne, in his *Capitularies*—a collection of ordinances arranged in chapters—prescribes that on every Sunday the priest should bless water before Mass. On Easter Sunday and Whit Sunday water is not blessed, as on these days that which has been blessed the day before is used. The ritual for the blessing of water is full of meaning. The priest takes salt and water, and, having exorcised them, mixes them together, and finally blesses them with certain prayers.

What do these ceremonies mean ? The property of *salt* is to preserve from corruption ; that of *water*, to purify. The priest *exorcises* them—that is, delivers them from all contact with the Devil ; this the Church always does whenever she raises a creature to a sacred use. He *mixes* them, that the consecrated water may contain the virtue which preserves from corruption, as well as that which purifies. He *blesses* them with the sign of the Cross, that Cross which is the weapon of salvation and the source of all grace. He *prays :* he asks that the water may have the power of driving the Devil from our souls, our bodies, and our homes, of healing our diseases, and of bringing

down upon us the presence and succour of the Holy Ghost.

Holy water has the power to efface the venial sins of all who use it with faith in Jesus Christ and attrition or imperfect contrition for their faults. "*Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin*" (Ps. l. 4).

Why does the *Asperges* take place before High Mass?

The *Asperges* takes place before the greatest of all liturgical actions—the Mass—to teach us a great truth, which is insisted on in all the prayers in preparation for the Holy Sacrifice. It is that we must purify ourselves for this great Act.

In the Old Law, when God details to His priests and people the rite of oblation, it is surprising to see the number of purifications which He prescribes for this purpose. And yet the sacrifices of Israel, though sacred, were far inferior to that of Christians. "*To no nation,*" exclaims St. Thomas, "*has it been given to have their gods so near them as is our God to us.*"

During the *Asperges* the choir sings the following antiphon, which is immediately followed by the first verse of the *Miserere* and the *Gloria Patri:*

Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo et mundabor; lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor.

Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop,[1] O Lord, and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow (Ps. l. 9).

The priest first asperses the altar to banish from it the spirit of darkness who roams about everywhere, even within the precincts of the sanctuary. He then sprinkles himself, for he, above all others, ought to be pure. Next

[1] Hyssop is a plant with tufted leaves which the Jews used for their aspersions.

he passes down the ranks of the congregation, imparting to them purifying graces.

And while performing this ceremony he recites in a low voice, with the aid of his ministers, the *Miserere*, whereby he expresses the feelings of repentance that animate both himself and the people—feelings which dispose them to receive the gift of God.

During Paschal-time—that is to say, from Easter to Whitsuntide inclusively—the choir sings a different antiphon, which is followed by the first verse, no longer of the *Miserere*, but of Ps. cxvii.—"*Confitemini Domino.*" The following is the antiphon, which is suggested by Ezech. xlvii. 2 :

Vidi aquam egredientem de templo a latere dextro, Alleluia; et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista salvi facti sunt, et dicent, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, Alleluia; and all to whom that water came were saved, and they shall say, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

As we have said above, water was not blessed before Mass on Easter Sunday or Whit Sunday. The water from the baptismal fonts blessed the day before was used on these feasts. Holy Church at this liturgical season is wholly occupied with the benefits conferred upon us by Baptism, for at one time it was especially administered on these days. The antiphon speaks of the salutary fruits of the Sacrament of Regeneration, and invites us to be joyful and thankful. For this reason the *Miserere* is discontinued at this time.

If we had more faith, we should always be most careful to be in church in time to reap the graces of the *Asperges*.

We shall not deal here at any length with a ceremony which is no longer carried out except in a few dioceses and monasteries, namely, the *procession* of the clergy inside or outside the church, a ceremony of great antiquity,

which takes place immediately before Mass. It explains the origin of the *Stations*—that is, those places of assembly whither the faithful went in procession and where Holy Mass was offered up.

As our work has chiefly a practical aim. we shall explain only the actual rite of the Mass.

FIRST PART

The Mass of the Catechumens.

In olden times the Mass was divided into two chief parts: the *Mass of the Catechumens*[1] and the *Mass of the Faithful*. This will be clearly understood if we remember that the Mass of the Catechumens was really only an imitation of the readings given and explained in the ancient Jewish synagogue. The Church borrowed this didactic idea for her own Liturgy, and it became the Mass of the Catechumens; then the Eucharistic Action was added to it, which was the Mass of the Faithful. The first extended from the Introit to the Offertory, while the second extended from the Offertory to the *Ite Missa Est*, and formed the Sacrifice properly so called. We shall keep to this division, as it is both more historical and liturgical. As we have just explained, the word *Missa—Mass*—means *dismissal*. The expressions, "Mass of the Catechumens" (*Missa Catechumenorum*)[2] and "Mass of the Faithful" (*Missa Fidelium*), originally designated the dismissal of the catechumens at the time of the Offertory, and that of the faithful at the end of the Sacrifice. Nowadays we look

[1] The catechumens were aspirants to Baptism. They were only by degrees initiated into the mysteries of the faith and the ceremonies of worship; thus they were only allowed to attend a part of the Holy Sacrifice.

[2] The *Mass of the Catechumens* was also called *Præ-Missa*—not only because it preceded the true Mass, but also on account of its preparing the celebrant and faithful by its readings for the *Mass of the Faithful*. (See article of Callewaert in *Collationes Brugenses*, xii. 722.)

upon the first of these Masses, consisting of prayers and instructions, as a solemn preparation for the second.

We shall, then, briefly explain the Mass of the Catechumens.

We must, however, first remark that, being unable to place elsewhere the explanation of the *Prayers at the Foot of the Altar*, we are obliged to give it here. These prayers, as is well known, did not at one time form part of the Mass of the Catechumens, for the simple reason that they are of a comparatively recent introduction. Moreover, as we shall see, their character is rather that of a private preparation for the Holy Sacrifice—a preparation which, formerly left to the devotion of the priest and his ministers, only later on, when fixed and determined, came to be the beginning of the Mass.

§ 1. Prayers at the Foot of the Altar.

These prayers are : the *Sign of the Cross ;* the *Introibo* and the Psalm *Judica me ;* the *Confiteor*, with the *Invocations ;* and, finally, the two prayers *Aufer a nobis* and *Oramus te*, which the priest recites on ascending the altar steps. All these prayers, together with the *Incensing of the Altar*, prepare for the great Act.

The preparation for the Sacrifice of the Mass, as we have just said, was formerly left to each one's devotion. Before the ninth century the Church gave no definite directions about these prayers. The Missals but rarely mention them, and the first *Ordos* or *Roman Rituals* are silent on the matter. No rubric, moreover, determines where they were to be said. In some churches—for example, in Tours, at the tomb of St. Martin—they were recited in a private chapel; at Chartres they were said in the choir; at Soissons at the entrance of the sanctuary; the Carthusians used to recite them at the Gospel side of the

altar; at Rheims they were said in the sacristy. These prayers are, therefore, of comparatively recent introduction. They have always been substantially the same, expressing sentiments of confidence in God, confession of sin, and repentance begging for mercy. They are intended to merit the grace of purity, so that the priest may worthily ascend to the altar and the faithful present thereon their gifts.

The Introibo and the Psalm Judica me.

The priest, having come to the foot of the altar, says, making the sign of the Cross:

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Amen.	In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The sign of the Cross is made here, as it is the commencement of a new act. Often during the Holy Sacrifice we shall meet with similar cases—for example, at the *Adjutorium*, which follows. This *Adjutorium* is "the beginning of a part which was inserted later, and which used to exist separately" (Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*).

By the words accompanying the sign of the Cross the priest announces to the faithful that he is about to renew the memory of the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

With his ministers he then says the following antiphon:

Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.	I will go unto the altar of God, to God, Who giveth joy to my youth.

St. Ambrose says the above words were put by Holy Church into the mouth of the neophytes as they proceeded from the baptismal fonts to the altar to receive the Body of the Lord. They were, in the words of St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 2), "*as new-born infants, without guile*"—beautiful in youth and innocence.

The priest also, drawing near to God's altar, will enter into communion with the Most High, and by this contact his "*youth shall be renewed like the eagle's*" (Ps. cii. 5), and his soul transported.

At the same time, remembering that he is but a man, he is humbled at the feet of his Lord by the knowledge of his own frailty and unworthiness: "*Judica me, Deus . . .* Judge me, O God . . .," and he continues with his ministers the recitation of this magnificent forty-second Psalm, in which, like the prophet, he avows alike his fear, desire, and confidence:

PSALM XLII.

Judica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta: ab homine iniquo, et doloso erue me.

Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy; deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.

Quia tu es Deus fortitudo mea: quare me repulisti, et quare tristis incedo, dum affligit me inimicus?

For Thou, O God, art my strength, why hast Thou cast me off? And why do I go sorrowful, whilst the enemy afflicteth me?

Emitte lucem tuam, et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt, et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua.

Send forth Thy light and Thy truth; they have conducted me, and brought me to Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles.

Et introibo ad altare Dei: ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.

And I will go unto the altar of God; to God who giveth joy to my youth.

Confitebor tibi in cithara, Deus, Deus meus: quare tristis es, anima mea, et quare conturbas me?

I will praise Thee upon the harp, O God, my God; why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?

Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi: salutare vultus mei, et Deus meus.

Hope in God, for I will still praise Him, the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui sancto.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The priest again says the antiphon: "*Introibo ad altare Dei* . . . I will go unto the altar of God."

This forty-second Psalm has been used by the Roman Church from the eleventh century. Some authors think that, until the time of St. Pius V., who in the sixteenth century reformed the Missal, its use was merely a matter of devotion. This Pope, however, made its recitation compulsory. At Masses for the Dead and during Passiontide it is omitted. A mystic reason is given by some authors for this omission. One of the verses expresses joy, and this is thought to be unfitting for days when sadness predominates. The historical reason is that the Mass for the Dead and that of Passiontide have retained more than others the old simplicity of rite. The Psalm *Judica me* is of rather late origin, and has not been added to these two Offices, still so full of the austere charms of the primitive Liturgy.

Let us all, then, make use of this Psalm, so full of unction, uniting ourselves to the priest, who has in his heart the desires and sentiments of the whole congregation; and let us make devoutly the sign of the Cross, trembling before the altar of God, and let us humble ourselves, that we may rise again more confident. This confidence the priest, and we with him, will find in God's help.

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini, qui fecit cœlum et terram. — Our help is in the Name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

This confidence both priest and faithful are about to make still more sure by the confession of their sinfulness.

The Confiteor.

The *Confiteor*, or *Confession*, is found in all ancient Liturgies. Like the Psalm *Judica me*, it did not in early times form part of the Mass properly so called. It was a prayer which could usefully be said before the Holy Sacri-

fice, and according to one's devotion; and this explains the rather numerous variations of the *Confiteor*. The form now in use in the Roman Church dates from the thirteenth century. It was prescribed by St. Pius V., and must be recited at the foot of the altar. It is that which is given in all our Roman Missals for the laity:

Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus sanctis, et vobis, fratres (the ministers say: *et tibi, pater*), *quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opere; mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaelem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes sanctos, et vos fratres* (*et te, pater*), *orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum.*

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever a Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the Saints, and to you, brethren (to you, Father), that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech blessed Mary ever a Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the Saints, and you, brethren (and you, Father), to pray to the Lord our God for me.

The ministers, in their own name and that of the faithful, answer:

Misereatur tui omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis tuis, perducat te ad vitam æternam.

May Almighty God be merciful to thee, forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to everlasting life.

The ministers then recite the *Confiteor*, after which the priest says the above prayer, adding for himself and the people:

Indulgentiam, absolutionem et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum, tribuat nobis omnipotens, et misericors Dominus.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution and remission of our sins.

The ministers answer: "*Amen.*"

Then alternately the priest and his ministers proceed :

P. Deus, tu conversus vivificabis nos,
M. Et plebs tua lætabitur in te.
P. Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam,
M. Et salutare tuum da nobis.
P. Domine exaudi orationem meam,
M. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

P. O God, being turned again, Thou wilt quicken us,
M. And Thy people shall rejoice in Thee.
P. Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy,
M. And grant us Thy salvation.
P. O Lord, hear my prayer,
M. And let my cry come unto Thee.

What is the spirit of all these prayers ? They tend to excite in our hearts compunction. Truly the first sacrifice to be offered to God is a contrite and humble heart. The priest is the first to acknowledge, and that publicly, that he is a sinner ; yea, and that he has offended much in thought, word, and deed ; he even abases himself so far as to ask the faithful to pray for him. As befits a sinner, during the whole of the *Confiteor* he keeps his hands joined together, and remains bowed down. During the *Misereatur*, which follows, he still maintains this humble posture, because this prayer is made for the priest humbled before God (Callewaert ; see also D. Lescouhier, *Explication des Principales Cérémonies et Fêtes Religieuses*).

In their turn the faithful enter into these same sentiments. Together with the ministers, and through them, they bow down and confess their sins ; after which both priest and faithful mutually express their repentance, and beseech Almighty God for the forgiveness of their offences.

What humility there is in this *mea culpa*, thrice repeated by all ! When we strike our breasts, full of contrition for our sins, we almost seem to say that we desire to break our hearts, that God may make new hearts of them, hearts more pleasing to Himself.

How efficacious in God's eyes is such a prayer! There is no doubt that it goes straight to Him, for, in the words of the Holy Ghost, "*the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds*" (Ecclus. xxxv. 21). How confident also is this urgent and mutual supplication, addressed to Him Who makes souls rejoice, and reserves for them the salvation besought at the foot of His altar.

After the *Indulgentiam* quoted above, a rubric was once observed, which is now only met with in the Bishop's Mass. This last Mass, as we know, has retained many primitive rites. Originally it was only at this moment the priest put the maniple on his left arm. This was on account of the much larger size of the ancient chasubles, which, as we have seen, used to cover and, after a manner, envelop the whole of the priest's body. The priest went up to the altar without raising his arms. The Confession ended, he tucked up the chasuble and received on his arm the maniple, which was not needed until then.

After the last verses of the prayer already explained, the priest says: "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you," and the ministers answer: "*Et cum spiritu tuo* — And with your spirit."

This salutation, so often occurring in the Liturgy, was used by the Hebrews. Booz, the husband of Ruth, greeted the reapers with "*The Lord be with you*" (Ruth ii. 4). It was the customary greeting of St. Paul to the Christians. He addresses the wish, "*the Lord be with thy spirit,*" to his disciple, St. Timothy (II. Tim. iv. 22).

Generally this mutual salutation between priest and people announces an important prayer. It signifies that the priest receives the desires of the faithful, and is about to speak to God on their behalf. But before he formulates

his prayer, he says to them : " *May the Lord be with you,*" to inspire you to ask aright ; and the people answer : " *May He also be with your spirit,*" whilst you offer up our petitions.

The Aufer a nobis and the Oramus te.

The priest raises his hands, as though to seek help from Heaven, and then says in an audible voice : " *Oremus—Let us pray.*" Accompanied by the deacon and subdeacon, he ascends the altar steps, reciting on his own behalf and that of his ministers the following prayer :

Aufer a nobis, quæsumus, Domine, iniquitates nostras, ut ad Sancta sanctorum puris mereamur mentibus introire. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Take away from us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our iniquities, that we may be worthy to enter with pure minds into the Holy of Holies. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The priest begs from God, not merely the pardon, but also the obliteration of his own faults, and those of his ministers, so that neither trace nor impression may be left of them in mind, imagination, or senses. He enters the Holy of Holies, the secrecy of the sanctuary, where he will converse with God alone. He penetrates, like Moses, into the cloud ; and to signify this mystery the ancient rituals ordered the priest to take leave here of the people by turning to them and saying : " *Brethren, pray for me !*"

The priest, having ascended to the altar, says secretly the following prayer :

Oramus te, Domine, per merita Sanctorum tuorum, quorum reliquiæ hic sunt, et omnium Sanctorum, ut indulgere digneris omnia peccata mea. Amen.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy Saints whose relics are here, and of all the Saints, that Thou wouldst deign to pardon all my sins. Amen.

At the words, " *whose relics are here,*" he kisses the altar.[1] In the Liturgy the kiss is a salute, a sign of respect and love.

[1] See what has been said of the altar in our Preliminary Notes, p. 16.

The altar, according to St. Optatus, is the throne of the Lord's Body and Blood, and, according to St. Ambrose, the figure of this Sacred Body. This kiss, then, is intended for Jesus Christ.

The priest kisses also the altar to venerate the precious remains of the holy bodies that are enclosed therein. Every time he turns to the faithful he will kiss the altar, to signify that he receives the peace of Jesus Christ, and transmits the same to them.

In the *Oramus te* the priest for the last time implores, through the merits of all the Saints, the forgiveness of his sins.

This prayer is very ancient. It dates from the end of the ninth century.

The priest, filled with compunction, has ascended to the altar. But repentance is the mother of joy; so the hearts of all are full of hope. Incense will now be wafted towards Heaven, canticles will resound, and prayers rise up to God.

The Incensing of the Altar.[1]

As soon as the celebrant has kissed the altar, and has recited the above prayer, the deacon presents the incense, saying: "*Benedicite, Pater reverende*—A blessing, reverend Father." Notice these expressions of respect. The priest is a Father, the spiritual Father of all the congregation around him.

Let us note, moreover, that each time the deacon passes anything to the priest he kisses first the object, then the priest's hand. On taking it back, he kisses the hand first and then the object. All this is done in token of profound respect both for the person of him who represents

[1] See the *Revue Bénédictine*, vol. i., pp. 207, 272, etc., for an article on the subject by Dom Boniface Wolff, O.S.B.

Christ and for the object which is being used in the Holy Sacrifice.

In Masses for the Dead the deacon, as a sign of repentance and sorrow, does not kiss anything.

The celebrant puts incense into the thurible, saying :

Ab illo benedicaris in cujus honore cremaberis. — Mayest thou be blessed by Him in Whose honour thou art to be burnt.

Before blessing the incense he joins his hands—that is, he first prays—for the priest only blesses in the Name of God. In thus joining his hands he seems to call down this benediction (Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. xi., p. 274). Then, taking the thurible, he incenses in silence the cross, the relics exposed, the upper part, the surface, the front, and both sides of the altar. In olden times the priest, after having incensed the surface of the altar, handed the thurible to the deacon, who then made the circuit of the consecrated stone, incensing it meanwhile in every direction. The construction of our altars renders this generally impossible, so the priest supplies it by incensing as has been described.

The altar is incensed twice during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—at this point and at the Offertory. Of this latter incensing we shall speak in its proper place.

It should be observed that the incensing here is—at least, in our Liturgy—scarcely as ancient as that at the Offertory. Indeed, it does not occur in the Mass for the Dead, which, as we have mentioned above, has preserved in its rites much of the primitive simplicity. It appears, however, from the *Ordinary of Monte Cassino*, that towards the year 1100 it was already carried out in many places. As to the Greeks, they incense the altar during a considerable part of the Mass.

Let us add that this incensing seems to have been intro-

duced in order to recall in some way the rite of the consecration of an altar. Now, we have seen that this rite prescribes the almost constant incensing of the altar to be consecrated, and that this is done to show veneration to it. There is a similar legitimate reason for this incensing in the Mass. Indeed, as we have explained, the altar in the sanctuary is the object of a very special veneration. The priest has just kissed it with love, because he has thought of the Christ Whom it recalls to him. At the same time, it would seem, he feels the necessity of honouring and purifying this table, to which he has drawn near for the purpose of accomplishing such great things upon it. Like Magdalen on the eve of the Sacrifice of the Cross, he perfumes the feet of Him Whom we shall see in a few moments renewing the mysteries of His Passion. By its virtue this incense attracts and fixes the attention of the Almighty upon the altar; and all that will be said and done there will savour of its perfume. The altar being now prepared, God may descend upon it.

While the celebrant is incensing the altar, the deacon and subdeacon each hold up a corner of his chasuble. For this rubric there was once a practical reason. The ancient chasuble used to cover the whole body, and so, in order to use his hands freely, the priest used to gather it over his arms. That he might not be inconvenienced in his movements, he needed the assistance of his ministers, who lifted the chasuble from behind or prevented it from falling on to his arms in front.

After the incensing of the altar, the priest himself is incensed by the deacon: this is a general rule. It is a mark of respect; for does not the priest represent Jesus Christ?

§ 2. From the Introit to the Offertory.

Here commences the Mass of the Catechumens properly so called.

Originally this Mass had, above all, a doctrinal and didactic character, for at it readings were given which were frequently commented upon, and which were intended to instruct the congregation. Soon there were added to these readings certain prayers, which we find nowadays under the form of the *Introit*, the *Kyrie Eleison*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and the *Collect*. We shall explain these different prayers and instructions in the order in which they occur in the *Ordinary of the Roman Mass*.

The Introit.

Opening our Roman Missal at the first page, at the Mass for the First Sunday in Advent, what do we read there ?

I read there : *Introit*, then a text, a versicle and responsory, and the *Gloria Patri*. What is the meaning of all this ?

The *Introit*, from the Latin *introitus—an entry*—is a chant which was formerly executed by the choir, whilst the celebrant, his preparation being made, left the sacristy accompanied by his ministers, and entered the sanctuary. We have said above that the prayers which are now recited at the foot of the altar were of old only a preparation for the Mass.

Here used to take place a ceremony of which there remains now only a remembrance in the Pontifical Mass : on entering the sanctuary, the Bishop met the deacon, who presented to him the *Sancta*. These *Sancta* were a particle, which had been reserved from the preceding Sacrifice. The Bishop bowed himself down in adoration. We shall see later what was done with this particle. This

rite has now disappeared, yet the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which the celebrating Bishop makes before entering the choir, recalls it.

The *Introit* was composed of an *antiphon*,[1] which was originally a verse taken from the Psalm that was to follow it. This Psalm was chanted—either the whole or a great part of it—until the celebrant reached the altar, when the singing stopped. Since the eighth century the antiphon is followed by only one verse of the Psalm and the *Gloria Patri*, after which the antiphon is repeated. It was not the custom for the celebrant—at least, before the year 900—to recite the *Introit*, nor, indeed, anything else that was chanted by the choir. The introduction of Low Mass, which is of comparatively recent origin, led to the priest taking the place of the choir—a practice which has even extended to High Masses, and has since become obligatory. We shall find later a similar case with regard to the Gospel.

On beginning the *Introit* the priest signs himself with the sign of the Cross, for it is here really that the Mass properly so called begins. Now, at the commencement of every fresh action or prayer, the early Christians, as already stated, were wont to make the sign of the Cross. In certain churches—for instance, at Laon—the sign of the Cross made at the *Introit* was accompanied with the words: "*Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*—Our help is in the Name of the Lord"; in others with: "*In nomine Patris*—*In the Name of the Father* . . .," as at St. Remy's in

[1] On account of its etymology, *antiphon* may be said to apply to anything chanted alternately by different voices, such as hymns or Psalms. Nowadays this word is restricted to an extract drawn from Holy Scripture, or from ecclesiastical writings, and which serves as a heading to a Psalm. The whole choir chants it before and after the Psalm. Of old such an antiphon was repeated after each verse of the Psalm.

Rheims. The prayers have disappeared, but the sign of the Cross has remained.

In Masses for the Dead the priest also makes the sign of the Cross; but, as the words with which he begins apply very specially to the dead, he cannot himself benefit by the benediction implored by the *Introit*; therefore, instead of signing himself, the priest makes the sign of the Cross over the Missal, applying the blessing to the dead.

The *Introit* is a portion of the Liturgy very deep in meaning, for it announces and briefly comments on the mystery or the feast solemnized by the Holy Sacrifice. We should read it with the priest, and abandon our souls to the sentiments it expresses.

The Kyrie Eleison.

This invocation, which immediately follows the *Introit*, is composed of two Greek words meaning "*Lord, have mercy!* [*on us*]."

This formula was originally the reply of the people to certain prayers said by one of the ministers. Taken together, they formed a kind of litany or dialogue. The prayers have fallen into disuse, while the response of the people has survived.

The singing of the *Kyrie* is common to the Greeks and to the Latins. The former use it much more frequently than we do. Even among the Latins there is a divergence in its use. At Milan, for instance, where the Ambrosian Rite is followed, there are three *Kyries* after the *Gloria in Excelsis*, three after the Gospel, and three more after the ablutions. In the days of St. Gregory the Great, in the sixth century, the Roman Rite ordered the *Kyrie Eleison* to be sung alternately with the *Christe Eleison* until the Bishop made a sign to stop. For several centuries the

number of these invocations has been reduced to nine. The three first *Kyries* are addressed to God the Father, the three *Christes* to God the Son, and the three last *Kyries* to God the Holy Ghost.

This formula, "*Lord, have mercy on us*," is of frequent occurrence in Holy Scripture. It should be for us one of those simple but fervent prayers which, as arrows, go straight to the heart of the Almighty. The Gregorian melody accompanying and embellishing these invocations helps us to realize that they are so many flights towards Heaven. Let us say them again and again, using them with faith, as did the needy in the Gospel.

The Gloria in Excelsis.

The *Gloria in Excelsis*, like the *Kyrie*, is a sacred hymn of Greek origin ; traces of it are found as early as the second century. To the words of the Angels were added, before the fourth century, acclamations to God the Father ; finally, the controversies on the subject of the Divinity of the two other Divine Persons led to further additions, and thus it became a hymn to the Most Holy Trinity (Father Blume, S.J., on the *Gloria in Excelsis*).

For a long time it was permitted to chant the *Gloria in Excelsis* only at Christmas—at the beginning of the midnight Mass. About the year 500, Pope Symmachus extended this privilege to Sundays and to the Feasts of Martyrs, but for Bishops only ; priests might recite it only on Easter day. It was only about the year 1084 that the faculty was conceded generally to priests.

When is the *Gloria in Excelsis* said ?

The *Gloria in Excelsis* and the *Te Deum*, in the ancient Liturgy, were often closely connected. Originally the *Gloria* was chanted at the end of Lauds ; then it was replaced by the *Te Deum*, which was soon transposed to

Matins, the *Gloria* being reserved for Mass (Blume, see *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. xiv., p. 543).

The *Gloria in Excelsis* is said at Mass whenever the Roman Office enjoins the *Te Deum* at Matins It is also recited on Mundy Thursday and Holy Saturday, owing to the solemnity of these days.

It is not said in any of the Votive Masses, with the exception of that of the Blessed Virgin on Saturday, that of the Angels, and the Solemn Votive Mass "*for any special necessity.*" As early as the eleventh century the Church drew up a special Office in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and little by little a full Office with the *Te Deum* at Matins; and, in accordance with the rubric, the *Gloria in Excelsis* is said at Mass on days when this Office is recited. It is also the canticle of the Angels, because they sang the first phrase of it above the crib of the Infant God, whence the name *Angelic Hymn* given to this prayer. Finally, it is sung in the Votive Mass "*for any special necessity,*" because of the solemnity of this Mass and the number of people who, as a rule, are present at it.

It is omitted in Masses for the Dead, and during Advent and from Septuagesima until Easter in Masses of the *Proper of the Season*,[1] to signify the spirit of penance and sadness predominant on these days. Anciently it was omitted even on feasts in Lent. From the beginning of the twelfth century we see the Popes giving, by special Bull, permission to some monasteries to chant the *Angelic Hymn* on feasts in Lent—for example, on May 10,

[1] The *Proper of the Season* and the *Proper of the Saints* are distinguished in the Liturgy. The *Proper of the Season* contains the Offices and Masses of the movable part of the liturgical year—namely, that which the varying date of the Feast of Easter regulates. In this *Proper* are found the greater part of the solemnities of the year and of the liturgical seasons which prepare for it—Advent, Lent, and the time after Pentecost. The *Proper of the Saints* contains the Offices and Masses celebrated in honour of Our Lady and the Saints.

1119, to the Abbey of Tournus, and on March 22, 1275, to that of *Bonne Espérance* (*cf.* U. Robert, *The Bulls of Pope Calixtus II.*, vol. i., p. 15; Paris, 1891. E. Mayhe, *Chronicon Bonæ Spei*, 1704; p. 219).

One word more concerning the rubrics which regulate the recitation of this canticle. The priest, at the centre of the altar, extends his hands, raises them towards Heaven, and then rejoins them. This he always does when he wishes to show his love of heavenly things or more earnestly to implore grace. He bows his head at the word *Deo* out of respect for the holy Name of God, and likewise at the words *adoramus te, gratias agimus tibi*, and *suscipe deprecationem nostram*, which clearly express the principal ends of the Sacrifice. The priest finishes the Angelic Hymn with the sign of the Cross, as he will other important prayers of the Holy Mass—for example, the *Credo*, and the *Sanctus;* formerly he ended the *Agnus Dei* in the same way.

We shall now give this beautiful hymn:

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe; Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers. Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

A word of explanation: There are in this hymn two things, *praise* and *supplication*—praise to God the Father, Who is honoured through the work of the Redemption of fallen man, and supplication to God the Son, Who realizes and perfects in us His pacifying Redemption. This is all simply stated in the first words of the *Gloria*, and developed in the verses which follow.

How ardent and impressive is the final invocation to God the Son: "*Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone most high, O Jesus Christ!*" etc. Where can we find a more fervent act of faith?

Ah! nowadays more than ever men wish to rob us of Jesus; they wish to snatch from us our faith in His Divinity and in His Redemption. "*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life*" (St. John vi. 69). Against all the temptations of this world, against all the blasphemies of impiety, let us protest and confess that *Jesus Christ alone is holy, He alone Lord, He alone the Most High, with the Holy Ghost in the glory of the Father.*

How many even very pious souls are ignorant of such beautiful and profound prayers as are contained in the *Gloria!*

The Collect.

The *Gloria in Excelsis* being finished, the priest kisses the altar.

Turning towards the people, he says: "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you." This is ordinarily a salutation of peace, but here it is something more. According to Dom Guéranger, it is an urgent invitation to recollection, for the minister of God seems to say: "Be very attentive, because what follows is of the greatest importance; I am going to speak in the name of Christ." The people answer the priest's salutation with the words: "*May the Lord be with your spirit*," whilst you are expressing our prayers.

It should be noted here that, on days when the *Gloria in Excelsis* is recited, Bishops say "*Pax vobis*—Peace be with you," in place of "*Dominus vobiscum.*" And, indeed, there is some connection between this wish and the Angelic Hymn, for the peace that the Bishop wishes the people is the same that is announced "to men of good will" in the *Gloria in Excelsis.* Bishops alone say "*Pax vobis,*" for, before the eleventh century, as we have already stated, they alone recited the *Gloria in Excelsis.* When afterwards the ordinary priest was allowed to recite this canticle, he still followed the old practice of saying "*Dominus vobiscum.*"

The people having answered the priest, the latter says: "*Oremus*—Let us pray." Formerly the deacon used to add, "*Flectamus genua*—Let us kneel," and the faithful immediately knelt down, and prayed for some time in silence. The subdeacon announced the moment for rising again by saying, "*Levate*—Rise up." This rite of the *Flectamus* is still observed in certain Masses of the *Proper of the Season*, which, like the Mass for the Dead, have preserved more of the primitive form.

Sometimes, after the *Oremus*, as on Good Friday, the priest specified the persons or things to be prayed for, and then recited the prayer called the *Collect.*

The word *Collect* is derived from the Latin *collecta*, meaning *gathered together*, because this prayer was said when the congregation (*Collectio*) had all assembled, whence it is called *Oratio ad collectam*—"The prayer over the assembled congregation." Such is the true origin of the word. Liturgists remark that the word *collectio* signifies also *a collection*, *résumé*, or *summary*, and that therefore it fitly denotes this solemn prayer, which is the compendium of the desires, collected and formulated by the priest in the name of all. This consideration sufficiently proves the liturgical importance of the Collect; it is one

of the principal and most solemn parts of the Holy Sacrifice and pre-eminently the prayer of the Church.

For some centuries there was hardly ever more than one Collect at Mass, as is still the case on the principal feasts of the liturgical year. In later times, on minor feasts, and especially on ferial days—that is, on days when the Church does not celebrate the memory of a Saint—the Collects might be two or more, but never more than seven. These prayers, joined to the first, which is the principal and in reality the true Collect, are either commemorations of Saints, whose feasts coincide with that of the day, or else prayers of devotion whicht he priest may add when the rubrics allow him to do so, but then only in odd numbers. Moreover, a Bishop often orders the priests of his diocese, and sometimes the Pope those of the whole Church, to add a particular prayer to the Collect of the Mass.

The Roman Missal contains as many as thirty-five prayers which can be ordered to be said by the Bishop. Some of their titles show us the solicitude of Holy Church in our spiritual and temporal needs, and quicken our faith in Providence; for example, there are diverse prayers *for the family, against persecutors of the Church, against evil doers, in time of famine, in time of earthquake, for obtaining rain, for procuring fine weather, for saving animals from disease, for the gift of tears, for continency, for patience*, etc.

The Collects, especially the most ancient ones, are really little masterpieces, if we consider their structure and the harmonious cadence of their phrases, and the penetrating unction and profound doctrine which they contain. In this last respect especially they constitute the precious rule of faith so well expressed in the axiom "*Lex orandi, lex credendi*—The rule of prayer is the rule of faith."

The Collect is usually composed of three parts: *praise, petition*, and *obsecration*. The first is either praise offered

to God or a short exposition of the mystery of the day. The second expresses an ardent wish in harmony with the same mystery. Finally, the obsecration, or conclusion, consists of an earnest supplication, in which the Church appeals to the merits of Jesus Christ, her Divine Head. This conclusion varies slightly, according as the prayer is addressed to God the Father or to God the Son. No prayer in the Roman Liturgy is addressed to the Holy Ghost. Few Collects are addressed to the Son, the greater part of them and all the ancient ones being directed to the Father. Of the Collects addressed to the Son, the most celebrated is that of *Corpus Christi* : " *Deus qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili*," etc., which is recited also at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It was written by St. Thomas Aquinas.

At the end of the Collect is answered *Amen*. This Hebrew word was much used by the Jews, even in the earliest ages. *Amen* has two principal meanings in the Liturgy. It denotes, in general, assent or belief—" Yes! It is so, I believe it " ; this is its sense in some Liturgies after the words of consecration. It often has also a deprecatory sense, and expresses a wish or fervent desire—" May it be so !" this is its usual meaning at the end of a prayer.

Such is the Collect. When we hear it, let us imagine that we hear the voice of the Universal Church pleading with God for each one of her children. How powerful is this, our Mother's prayer!

The Epistle.

The Collect has been said ; all the desires of the congregation have been presented to the Lord. The whole Church has spoken in the person of the priest ; but the Church still reserves for her children a solid and necessary nourishment. She still owes them instruction, that

strengthening bread without which every Christian life languishes and wastes away. And how does she instruct them ? She borrows her lessons from the inspired authors, and, above all, from the words of Jesus Christ : generally the Apostles, sometimes the Prophets, speak in the Epistle, the Master Himself in the Gospel. Who will dare to despise the inspired word, which is the Word of God ?

A few words now about the Epistle.

Readings at public Service are of the greatest antiquity. They were in use in the Jewish synagogue ; the Gospel speaks of the books of Moses and of the Prophets, which the doctors of the law expounded on the Sabbath day. The first Christians followed this example. Whenever they met together for Holy Mass, they began by reading passages from the Sacred Books. The first was the Epistle. Why is it so called ? It was taken from the Old or the New Testament, but generally from the Epistles of the Apostles, especially St. Paul ; hence the generic title of Epistle which that reading now bears. In place of the Epistle, there were sometimes read Bishops' letters, called *Irenicals*, from a Greek word meaning *peace*, because this exchange of letters between different Churches gave proof of and consolidated their union. On the feasts of Martyrs, in place of the Epistle, were read the acts of their martyrdom.

The Epistle always consisted of several readings. This custom is still kept in many of our Masses—for instance, on Ember days and in Lent. On these occasions there are usually two lessons, the first being taken from the Prophets, and the second being the Epistle properly so called. Since the sixth century, at least in Rome, there is only one reading, except on the rare occasions referred to above. The ancient usage has remained in the Ambrosian Liturgy, at Milan, which generally has two readings, and in the Armenian Liturgy, which regularly has three.

Where used the Epistle to be read ? It was read from the *ambo*, which term is derived from a Greek word signifying a *mountain* or an *elevated place*. The *ambo*[1] was a kind of platform, which was reached by means of several steps. It was constructed of stone or wood, and stood between the choir and the principal nave. It was not very high, and it could contain six or seven persons. The more important churches in olden days had ambos provided with three pulpits : one for the Gospel, another for the Epistle, and a third for the lesson from the Prophets. From them were read the Old and New Testaments, the acts of the Martyrs, the homilies of the Fathers, and everything that was calculated to instruct, or edify the faithful, or to correct their morals. Before commencing his lesson, the reader besought a benediction, saying : "*Jube, domne, benedicere* —Pray, sir, give me thy blessing." Gradually the name *jube* was given to the ambo, from which the above formula was so often repeated. Some ancient churches have preserved these *jubes*, some of which extend from one pillar to the other, thus closing up the entrance to the choir.

Who might read the Epistle ? At first this was the function of those who had received the order of *lector*. By degrees the honour fell to the subdeacon. In the ninth century this was almost universally the rule, though certainly until the end of the thirteenth century no meniion was made of the Epistle in the ordination of the subdeacon.

[1] In many of our ancient English churches the Gospel was sung from the *rood-loft*. This was a massive beam or platform, which was erected across the chancel arch ; there was here a large *rood*-crucifix, facing the nave of the church, on each side of which, as a rule, stood also figures of our Blessed Lady and St. John the Evangelist. This loft was generally reached by a spiral staircase leading from one of the transepts. Traces of these rood-lofts and the steps leading to them can be seen to-day in many of our pre-Reformation churches.—NOTE TO ENGLISH EDITION.

Formerly it was the rule for everybody, even the priest, to sit and listen to the reading of the Epistle, and this is still observed at a Pontifical Mass, the Bishop reciting it in a low voice after the subdeacon has finished. The priest says it at High Mass, whilst the minister is singing it.

After reading the Epistle, the subdeacon returns to the celebrant, kisses his hand, and receives his blessing. By this rite he "means to ask pardon for any faults he may have committed during the reading. This interpretation is suggested to us by the similar rite in the Lyonese Liturgy" (Desloge, *Studies on the Meaning of Liturgical Things*, p. 263; Paris, 1906).

At the end of the Epistle is answered: "*Deo gratias*—Thanks be to God." This formula was commonly used in the early Church. We often meet with it in St. Paul's Epistles, and nothing accords better with the piety of the first Christians and Martyrs. "What can we conceive in the mind," says St. Augustine, "pronounce with the lips, or write with the pen, better than *Deo gratias?* No expression can be more correct to say, more joyful to hear, more sublime to understand, or more fruitful to employ." Monks used to greet each other with the formula, *Deo gratias*. It frequently occurs in the Liturgy. What does it mean? It is a cry of gratitude to the Lord, the Author of all good. Thanksgiving in all things and at all times is one of the principal objects of the Liturgy.

The Gradual, Alleluia, and Tract.

Between the Epistle and the Gospel occur portions of the Liturgy called the *Gradual*, the *Alleluia Verse*, and the *Tract*. They are generally taken from the Psalms, and the use of them is as ancient as the reading of the lessons. Two of them are as a rule joined together. For instance, the *Gradual* is sung with the *Alleluia*, or sometimes with

the *Tract*, as is the case in Lent and penitential seasons, and in the Mass for the Dead. In Paschal-time there is a double *Alleluia Verse*.

Why are two chanted in succession? As we have already intimated, there were usually two lessons after the Collect, which were each followed by a canticle. When one lesson was judged sufficient, these two chants were brought together.

Let us remark in passing that these portions of the Liturgy are not intended, like the *Introit*, *Offertory*, and *Communion*, to occupy the minds of the faithful while other ceremonies are being carried out. They should be listened to for what they contain. "Hence we see what heresy is committed in substituting organ recitals for these chants" (Mgr. Duchesne, *Origins of Christian Worship*, p. 169).

The *Gradual* is so called from the Latin word *gradus*, meaning a step, because it was sung from the *ambo*, which had steps leading up to it. A cantor—in this instance the deacon—used to sing it. "To be deacon it was necessary to have a fine voice and to be thoroughly acquainted with the art of music" (Mgr. Duchesne). The choir ended the musical phrase.

The *Alleluia*, a chant full of joy and mystery, comes to us from the Jews. The word means, "Praise the Lord." Like the *Deo gratias*, it was familiar to the first Christians as an ejaculation of the heart. St. John in his Apocalypse tells us that it is the hymn of Heaven, the cry of joy of all the Saints (Apoc. xix. 1-7). It is used especially during Paschal-time, for then the prevailing spirit is joy, and everything speaks of the triumph of the risen Christ. The *Alleluia* is found in all the Liturgies, which is an evident sign of the antiquity of its use.

The *Tract*, which, as we have said, replaces the *Alleluia*

in Lent, is a Psalm without alternation, or refrain, or break—that is, *tractim*, or "straight on"—whence its name. Its melody is rich and of an altogether ancient style. On account of its especially grave character, it has been reserved for days of penance.

A few words concerning the *Sequence*. We may have noticed that the choir sings and sustains quite a series of notes on the last syllable of the *Alleluia*. These last neums, or detached groups of notes, were once called *Sequence*, from the Latin *sequentia*, because they followed the *Alleluia*. Later, the idea was suggested of accompanying them with a text, which has since become a hymn in prose or verse, and which, as a rule, follows the *Alleluia* of the Epistle. This idea is attributed to the monk Notker, who was Abbot of St. Gall, in Switzerland, about the year 880. The Roman Missal used to contain a great number of these hymns, which were also called *Proses*, because they were originally neither in metre nor rhythm. In the sixteenth century St. Pius V., in his reformed Roman Missal, retained only four Sequences—namely, the *Victimæ Paschali* for Easter, the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* for Whitsuntide, the *Lauda Sion* for Corpus Christi, and the *Dies Iræ* for Requiem Masses. The *Stabat Mater* was added later for the Feast of Our Lady of Dolours.

Religious sometimes have the privilege of singing special Sequences for the principal feasts of their Order.

The mystery of the feast is more clearly expressed by the Sequence than by other chanted pieces; and we cannot fail to admire the depth of its expression and its unspeakable charm of melody. This enthusiastic ode, this sweet prayer, ought ever to elevate and bring us nearer to God.

A great act is now to be accomplished, one of the most important of the Holy Sacrifice—namely, the reading of

the Gospel. So far it has been man, Prophet or Apostle, who has spoken ; now it is God Himself Who will teach us.

The Gospel.[1]

This Lesson was taken from the *Complete Gospel*, as it was called—that is, from a book containing the full text of the Four Gospels. The length of the text to be read was left to the judgment of the president of the assembly. This is still the custom with the Greeks. A special Gospel book was afterwards composed, containing a selection of extracts from the Gospels adapted to the different liturgical feasts, and definitely appointed to be read at the Holy Sacrifice.

The book of the Gospels was always esteemed in the Liturgy as an object of special veneration. It was rightly looked upon as representing Jesus Christ, for the Gospel is the precious casket of that everlasting word, one and the same with the Word of the Father, which came forth, living and efficacious, from the lips of the God-Man. St. John Chrysostom says that nobody touched it except with fear and trembling, being inspired by a great feeling of piety and reverence.

Sometimes this volume was most beautifully decorated. On great feasts it was customary to leave it on the altar the whole day. Monks and clergy used to carry it in triumph in their processions, incensing it the whole time. It was this book that the Legate or the Bishop kissed on entering a cathedral or monastery. St. Cyril of Alexandria tells us that at the Third General Council it was placed on a special throne, to show that Christ was the appointed Master and Head of those Sessions. This

[1] This chapter is a résumé of a deep and interesting study in the *Revue Bénédictine*, vol. i., 1884, then called *Messager des Fidèles*.

same custom was also observed at the Vatican Council. The Church orders oaths to be taken on this book. The Christians of the first ages followed the holy practice of carrying a copy of it upon their person, either on their breast or around their neck. The Greeks bury the Gospels along with their priests. It is the only liturgical book which is kissed, incensed, and signed with the sign of the Cross.

Who may read the Gospel at Mass? In the actual Liturgy of the Church this honour falls at Solemn Mass to the deacon, who at his ordination receives from the hands of the Bishop this sacred book, and with it "*the power to sing the Gospel in the Church of God.*" This important office, and that of approaching so near to the Body and Blood of Our Lord, account for the fact that the early Fathers so highly exalt the Order of the Diaconate, and even go so far as to call it a third priesthood.

It seems, however, that originally lectors were allowed to read the Gospel, just as they did the Epistle. In some places the Gospel was read by the priest himself, and on very great feasts by the Bishop or the Patriarch. We know that, in the Order of St. Benedict, it is the Abbot's privilege to sing the Gospel at Matins; this he does in his stall, vested with a stole, and assisted by two acolytes. History relates that, at the end of the Middle Ages, the German Emperors had acquired the privilege of chanting the Gospel at Matins on the Feast of Christmas. Charles IV. sang it at Basle, Mayence, and Cambrai. The Emperor Sigismund availed himself of this right at the Council of Constance in 1414, and that even in the presence of Pope John XXIII.

What great faith there was in those past ages! What great respect for the things of God! What a lesson for us all in this our day!

We shall briefly give in their order the ceremonies which accompany the singing of the Gospel.

In a solemn High Mass the celebrant recites the Gospel privately and in a low voice, just as he does the Epistle. This custom, however, dates only from the Middle Ages, for anciently the celebrating priest did not recite what was said by the deacon, subdeacon, lectors, or cantors ; in fact, the Epistles and Gospels were not found in the books used at the altar itself. Low Mass, introduced later on, as we have said, necessitated the composition of a book containing the whole text of the Liturgy, called the *Complete Missal*. This was afterwards used also at High Mass, and devotion soon led the celebrant to repeat in a low tone all that his ministers recited. This practice gradually became general, and was eventually made the rule.

The Epistle being ended, while the choir is singing one of the prescribed chants the subdeacon returns to the altar with the book of the Epistles, and approaches the priest. The latter places his hand upon the book for him to kiss, after which he blesses him. The subdeacon then transfers the Missal to the right side of the altar. In olden times the Missal was not removed until just before the Offertory, and then only to make room for the gifts that were to be offered, which the subdeacon brought from the credence table.

Let us notice that there occurs here a kind of repetition in the Liturgy, the priest accomplishing in a simple and private manner what the deacon will soon fulfil in a solemn and public way. This repetition extends not only to the reading of the sacred text, but also to two prayers that immediately precede it.

The celebrant, in passing over to the Gospel side, stops in the middle of the altar, and, profoundly inclined before the crucifix, recites in a low tone the *Munda cor*

meum and the *Dominus sit in corde meo*, which will presently be again recited, the first by the deacon and the second by the priest. Then he reads the sacred passage in a low voice ; but at the end he does not kiss the Missal, as at Low Mass, because in a few moments he will kiss the Gospel, which the subdeacon will bring to him after the deacon has solemnly chanted it. All that is here done by the priest is, so to say, a matter of private devotion. The official function will be fulfilled by the deacon.

In fact, the deacon, leaving the celebrant, has already taken the book of the Gospels from the credence table, and has returned to lay it upon the altar. At one time this book remained there during the whole of the Mass, which custom the Dominicans still observe. It was the duty of the deacon to place it there at the commencement of the Holy Sacrifice.

The private Gospel being finished, the celebrant puts incense into the thurible, and whilst making the sign of the Cross over it says :

Ab illo benedicaris in cujus honore cremaberis.

Mayest thou be blessed by Him in Whose honour thou art to be burnt.

At Toul the following formula was used : "*May the Lord kindle and fill our hearts with the odour of His heavenly inspiration, that we may rightly understand and practise the precepts of His Gospel.*"

The deacon then kneels on the steps of the altar, and recites the following prayer :

Munda cor meum, ac labia mea, omnipotens Deus, qui labia Isaiæ prophetæ calculo mundasti ignito : ita me tua grata miseratione dignare mundare, ut sanctum Evangelium tuum digne valeam nuntiare. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Cleanse my heart and my lips, O Almighty God, Who didst cleanse the lips of the Prophet Isaias with a burning coal ; and deign, through Thy gracious mercy, to purify me, that I may worthily announce Thy holy Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer is full of mystery. It alludes to the sacred ministry of the great Prophet Isaiah, whose lips were consecrated by the contact of a live coal taken by one of the Seraphim from the altar of Heaven. This coal was to purify and render him worthy to convey the oracles of the Lord to the people. The deacon is the herald of the word of the New Testament. He too trembles at the thought of the august ministry which falls to his lot, and he likewise begs for the purification of his heart and lips.

Rising, he takes from the altar the book of life. At this point, in the ancient Spanish Liturgy, the people used to acclaim the sacred book, saying: "*Praise be to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ!*" Like the Prophet, the deacon desires first to be commissioned, so he says:

Jube, domne, benedicere. — Pray, Father, give me thy blessing.

And the priest replies, with his hands joined:

Dominus sit in corde tuo, et in labiis tuis; ut digne et competenter annunties Evangelium suum. In nomine Patris et Filii ✠ et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. — May the Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest worthily and in a becoming manner announce His holy Gospel. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

This, with a slight modification, is the same prayer which the celebrant has previously made for himself, and which is always made at Low Masses. He then blesses the deacon, and lays his hand upon the book for him to kiss: it is Christ Who gives a mission to His minister, and opens for him in a sense the mysterious Book of His Word. The solemn and authorized messenger of the Word Incarnate descends from the altar.

The procession that immediately precedes the singing of the Gospel by the deacon is thus formed: First come the

acolytes with their lighted candles, then the thurifer with fire in the thurible, after him the subdeacon, and last of all the deacon, reverently carrying the book of the Gospels. The Cross at one time headed this procession, and was placed behind the reading-desk, facing the deacon, in such a way as to dominate the whole group; for the Gospel about to be sung is that of Jesus crucified. The candles are a sign of joy, representing the *Light of the World*, contained in the Holy Gospel: by this *Light* the nations are enabled to open their eyes to the truth of God, and to be purified and illumined. When the procession of the deacon commences, the Greek Liturgy bids the celebrant turn towards the people, and say: "*Here is wisdom; let us stand up and listen to the Holy Gospel.*"

All the people rise. Monks, priests, and even Bishops, uncover their heads. In olden times during the singing of the Gospel it was customary to lay aside the crutch-like sticks upon which the people leant to avoid fatigue during the long Services. Oriental Bishops took off their *pallium*, while the Emperors and the Kings of France, together with their wives, laid aside their crowns and diadems. Polish Princes were accustomed to draw and brandish their swords to testify their devotion to the cause of the Gospel.

St. Benedict says, in the eleventh chapter of his *Holy Rule*, that whilst the Abbot reads the Gospel (at Matins) all are to stand with fear and trembling.

The deacon solemnly intones the "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you," the people replying: "*Et cum spiritu tuo*—And with your spirit." This wish is a prayer in preparation for the act about to be performed. Let us observe that, except at the singing of the *Exultet* on Holy Saturday, this is the only occasion on which, in the presence of a priest or Bishop, the deacon may thus greet the congregation. Here the holy office he fulfils authorizes him to do so. He next

announces the passage of the Gospel to be sung: "*Initium* (or *sequentia*) *sancti evangelii secundum N* . . .—The beginning (or continuation) of the Gospel according to N . . ." Whilst he pronounces these words he traces with his thumb a cross upon the holy book,[1] and then in like manner signs himself on the forehead, lips, and breast; an example which the people imitate to show they are not ashamed of the truths of the Gospel, but are ready to confess them with their lips, in addition to bearing them deeply engraved upon their hearts.

The sign of the Cross made on the book is not a blessing of the text, but merely an explanatory or commemorative sign, which appears to mean, "*This is the book of the Crucified One.*"

The Gospel having been announced by the deacon, the people answer with enthusiasm: "*Gloria tibi Domine*—Glory be to Thee, O Lord." Formerly in some churches the full doxology[2] was said, of which the above words are but the commencement:

Gloria tibi Domine	O Lord, of Virgin-Mother born,
Qui natus es de virgine,	Be praise and glory unto Thee;
Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,	And to the Father infinite
In sempiterna sæcula.	And Holy Ghost, eternally.

At the end of the Gospel is said, "*Laus tibi, Christe*—Praise be to Thee, O Christ." In some places *Deo gratias* was said, as after the Epistle; in other places "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*—Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"; and elsewhere also *Amen*, as signify-

[1] It should be noted that this sign of the Cross ought to be made not on the cross found in some Missals just before the Gospel, nor on the words *initium* or *sequentia*, but at the actual *beginning* of the text (*Collationes Brugenses*, vol. ii., p. 546).

[2] The doxology (from δόξα, glory, and λόγος, a word) is a formula of praise to God. The complete doxology always praises the Holy Trinity; the more simple doxology only praises Christ.

ing an act of faith, "It is true; I believe it." St. Benedict bids his monks say *Amen* after the Gospel at Matins.

Then immediately the subdeacon, who has been holding the book of the Gospels whilst the deacon has been singing the sacred text (*cf.* Callewaert, *The Study and Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 24), bears the book to be kissed by the celebrant. At Low Mass the priest kisses the Missal as soon as he has finished reading the Gospel. This act is a mark of supreme homage to the Person of Christ, an act of adoration. Formerly both clergy and people kissed the book. The clergy kissed it while open, the laity when closed. This was done whilst the *Credo* was being sung, the subdeacon, accompanied by the thurifer, carrying the Gospel to each one in turn.

The celebrant, on kissing the book of the Gospels, says:

Per evangelica dicta deleantur nostra delicta. — May our sins be blotted out by the words of the Gospel.

The hearing of the Holy Gospel can produce this grace, for it has the virtue of awakening in the soul dispositions such as obtain pardon for sin.

The book of the Gospels is carried back to the credence table. This is a rather modern practice; formerly, as we have said, it was left on the altar.

At this point the sermon was generally preached to the people (see the *Apology* of St. Justin, i. 67). This used to be called the *Homily*. It was a simple development of the Gospel which had been read. This form of preaching was, and is, very acceptable to the faithful; we cannot too much encourage this custom. Very many Christians know nothing of the Gospel, and still more do not understand it. It is not astonishing, then, that it is not practised.

It was after the *Homily*, as St. Augustine intimates in one of his sermons (*Sermo XXXII.*, Antwerp, Plantin, 1576, p. 48), that the Bishop or priest read the notices to the faithful.

At Rome at one time *indulgences* were granted to the people after the sermon, and *public absolution* was given to them (*Ordo Romanus*, xiv., p. 53). This practice appears to have been substituted for the ancient rite of dismissing the catechumens and penitents, and for the prayers which were said over them with the imposition of hands, all of which took place just after the sermon.

In olden times, in fact, after the Bishop's sermon, the deacon dismissed the catechumens, crying in a loud voice :

"*Ite in pace catechumeni*—Let the catechumens depart in peace."

The singing of the Gospel is the culminating point of this part of the Mass ; all that has preceded has been leading up to it. "It was necessary," says one author, "that the sacred accents of psalmody should pre-dispose our hearts to receive the divine doctrines with compunction, docility, and fervour." To receive them in this manner is to fit our souls for happiness.

"*And it came to pass*," says the Gospel, "*as He* [*Jesus*] *spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to Him : Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck. But He said : Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it*" (Luke xi. 27 *et seq.*).

O Jesus, we believe all that Thou hast said and revealed, and to testify our faith in Thy Holy Gospel we shall sing the *Creed*.

The Credo.

After the Gospel the celebrant intones the *Credo*, the rest of which he recites in a low voice, while the choir continues the singing of it.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cœli et terræ, visibilium omnium et invisibilium:

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum; et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula; Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero; genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de cœlis [*hic genuflectitur*]*; et incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria Virgine;* ET HOMO FACTUS EST. *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas; et ascendit in cœlum; sedet ad dexteram Patris: et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos, et mortuos; cujus regni non erit finis.*

Et in Spiritum sanctum, Dominum, et vivificantem, qui ex Patre, Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre, et Filio simul adoratur, et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; consubstantial with the Father; by Whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven; [*here all kneel*] and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; AND WAS MADE MAN. He was crucified also for us, under Pontius Pilate, He suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; of Whose kingdom there shall be no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The *Credo* is called the *Symbol* of Faith, from a Greek word meaning a *gathering together* or *collection of several things*. It is a summary of the principal truths to be believed.

There are four Creeds in the Liturgy: the Apostles' Creed, that of Nicæa (325), that of Constantinople (381), and that said to be by St. Athanasius, quoted since the fifth century.

The Apostles' Creed is the most ancient, dating from the origin of the Church; it is also called the *Roman Creed*. It is the one given in the Breviary, which priests recite three times a day in their Office. We also learn the same in the Catechism.

The Athanasian Creed was formerly recited every day at the Office of *Prime*, but nowadays it is only said on Sundays at this same Hour.

The Symbol, or *Credo*, that is sung at Mass is a fusion of those of Nicæa and Constantinople. It is more complete and explicit than that of the Apostles, for it was composed expressly to refute heresies which had arisen in the Church.

During the first five centuries the *Credo* was not sung at Mass. When in the Liturgy the Creed was said, it was always in a low voice, because in the first ages the knowledge of the mysteries of faith was concealed from those not yet baptized. Strictly speaking, the Creed does not belong to the Mass of the Catechumens; but by the time the chanting of the Creed had been introduced, the catechumens were no longer kept under the rigid discipline of earlier days. In the year 510, at Constantinople, it was sung for the first time and at all Masses. Previously it used to be sung only once a year—on Good Friday. This practice passed from the East into Spain and France, then later, in the ninth century, it reached Rome.

If the Roman Church adopted it so late, it was because she was free from heresy ; so says Benedict VIII.

On what days is the *Credo* sung ?

The *Credo* is sung for two reasons : either the presence of a large number of people at Mass, or a special connection between the Symbol of Faith and the feast of the day.

The *Credo* is sung, for the first of these reasons, on all Sundays of the year, as well as on all solemn feasts, on the feast of the Dedication of a Church, and on patronal feasts ; also in churches which possess a notable relic of the Saint whose feast is being celebrated. It is fitting that, at an hour when the people are thus gathered together and united in body, they should be more closely united still in soul by their common belief ; this is why they repeat the *Creed*.

The *Credo* is sung, for the second reason, on feasts of Our Lady, for she is spoken of in the *Creed* ; on feasts of the *Angels*, who are brought to our minds by the word *invisibilium ;* on feasts of the *Apostles*, who first taught us the Faith ; of *Doctors*, who expounded and defended it ; and, finally, on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, since she was the first to believe in the Resurrection of Christ. It is omitted in Masses for the Dead, for though the holy souls do not yet enjoy the Beatific Vision, they have no longer to undergo trials and temptations in the matter of the Faith.

The rubrics which regulate the recitation of the *Credo* differ but little from those of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, so we need not speak of them.

After *Incarnatus est* has been sung, the deacon takes from the credence the *burse* containing the corporal, upon which the oblation is to repose, and carries it to the altar. He carries it closed, *not open* (*cf.* Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. xiii., p. 146), but with the opening turned towards him, so that when he arrives at the altar he may easily take out the corporal, and unfold and spread it.

SECOND PART

The Mass of the Faithful.

The first part of the Mass has contained praise, petition, and instruction. Man has been humbled, his heart filled with joy, his piety nourished with faith, and his mind enlightened. Both the ministers and the congregation are prepared.

Now the Sacrifice itself begins. Three things concur to its completion: the *Oblation*, or the offering of the matter of the Sacrifice; the *Consecration*, which constitutes and immolates the Victim; and finally the *Communion*, which enables man to be united physically to the very substance of the Victim.

The *Oblation* extends from the Offertory to the Preface; the *Consecration*, if we take it in a wide sense, extends from the Preface to the Pater Noster; the *Communion* comprises the remaining prayers of the Mass.

§ 1. From the Offertory to the Preface.

The *Oblation* extends from the Offertory to the Preface; it includes the prayers and ceremonies by which the matter of the Sacrifice is offered up to God.

The Oremus.

At the conclusion of the *Credo* the priest kisses the altar, and, turning to the people, says aloud: "*Dominus*

vobiscum";* to which is answered: "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*" Then the celebrant, inviting the people to prayer, adds: "*Oremus*—Let us pray"—in other words, the solemn moment is approaching, let us redouble our piety and fervour, let us recollect ourselves. From this moment he is silent; he will pray aloud no more until the Preface.

The celebrant has said "*Oremus*," but, contrary to the ordinary rubric, he does not recite an *oratio*, or a prayer properly so called. It seems as though our souls were in suspense. Mgr. Duchesne supposes that something has disappeared from this place—namely, the *Prayer of the Faithful*, which occurs at this point in other Liturgies than the Roman Liturgy. He conjectures that the solemn prayers (*orationes*) on Good Friday, in which the needs of the Church are represented to God, and in which we pray for the various ranks of the Sacred Hierarchy, formed at one time part of the ordinary Roman Mass. He adds: "Nothing in their tenor connects them specially with the solemnities of the Passion or of Easter. They are prayers for the ordinary needs of the Church, for peace, for the Bishop, and for the whole Hierarchy, down to confessors (ascetics), virgins, and widows; for the Roman Emperor; for the sick, the poor, prisoners, travellers, and sailors; for heretics, schismatics, Jews, and pagans. The same series of intentions occur repeatedly in the daily Liturgies of the Eastern Churches" (*Origins of Christian Worship*, p. 172).

It appears that up to the eleventh century no other prayers were recited at the *Oblation* except the *Secret*, which immediately precedes the *Preface*. We shall speak of this further on.

The Offertory.

Having said "*Oremus*," the priest recites in a low tone an antiphon which is called in the Missal the *Offertory*.

In order that we may rightly understand the meaning of

the *Offertory*, let us briefly recall the ceremony of the *Offering* or Oblation. It was at this moment that the faithful were accustomed to present the priest with gifts, either for the Sacrifice or for his own maintenance. A procession was formed. First the men, then the women, made their offerings of bread and wine on white cloths; after them came the clergy, priests, Bishops, or the Pope himself; their offerings were only of bread. From the bread were selected some loaves, which were shortly to be consecrated, and a portion of the wine offered was poured into the celebrant's chalice. The bread destined for consecration was taken from the offering of the clergy; the wine, from that of the people.

The bread not used for the Consecration was blessed and distributed to the people immediately after the Communion by the priest or deacon. It was called "Blessed Bread," or "Eulogy," from a Greek word meaning benediction. This "Blessed Bread" was to the early Christians a sign of union; they used to send it as a mutual gift to one another. This custom still exists in France and Italy, as also in the East. Families offer in their turn to the Church bread to be blessed and distributed to the congregation.

Until the eleventh century the bread and the wine were thus offered by the faithful. Little by little this practice fell into disuse as the Church became endowed with earthly goods, and was thus able to supply its needs from its own resources. The alms given nowadays to a priest that he may celebrate Mass for a particular intention may be considered as corresponding to the offerings of old. The only vestige, however, of the offering in the Mass itself is that still practised in some places at Masses for the Dead,[1]

[1] This refers to a practice in Belgium and elsewhere on the Continent, where it is the custom at Masses for the Dead for the people to make an offering of money at the Offertory. After the priest has offered the chalice, he descends the altar steps and presents

at the consecration of a Bishop, and the benediction of an Abbot.

We can now understand what the Offertory was. It was the antiphon, psalm, or responsory which used to be sung while the faithful made their offerings or gifts. Until the fourth century these offerings were made in silence. The Offertory was introduced at Carthage in the time of St. Augustine. St. Gregory the Great gave to it its special form: it consisted of an antiphon and several verses from the Psalms. The antiphon, according to the practice of those days, was repeated before each verse, and the singing was continued until the moment when the priest, beckoning to the cantors to stop, turned towards the people and said: "*Orate, fratres*—Brethren, pray that . . . ." When the offering ceased to be made, the antiphon alone was thought sufficient to be sung. Generally it consists of a verse of some Psalm, though occasionally it is taken from some other book of Holy Scripture, and even in some cases it has been composed by the Church herself. The Offertories of the Mass for the Dead and of that for the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost are the only ones which still recall the ancient formula.

As to melody the Offertory is one of the richest pieces of Gregorian chant. More mystical and profound than either the Introit or the Gradual, it disposes our souls to recollection that thus they may fittingly assist at the Adorable Sacrifice about to be renewed. The Offertory, then, more than any other part of the Mass, is a sublime and inspired prayer rising to the throne of God.

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the pax to the members of the congregation. As each one kisses it the priest says, "*Requiescat in pace*"; at the same time an alms is given towards Masses for the repose of the departed.—NOTE TO ENGLISH EDITION.

Prayers at the Oblation.

These prayers, called also "*The Little Canon*," are not mentioned by the early liturgists of the Middle Ages. In the reign of Innocent III. the Roman Church did not yet possess them; they were not used by her until the fourteenth century. In other Churches the priest, after placing the oblation on the altar, said the *Veni Sanctificator* (see p. 83) and then the *Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas*.

We shall now study the prayers said at the Oblation.

At the outset we must make one observation which is most important, and without which the prayers that are said up to the time of the Consecration can hardly be understood. The prayers of the Oblation refer to a twofold object: first to the matter of the Sacrifice—that is, to the bread and wine—and secondly to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, into which it will shortly be changed. The prayer accompanying the offering of the bread and wine is intended to set these two substances apart from common use; it is, as it were, a first sanctification of the matter, rendering it more fit for the great miracle of Transubstantiation which will be effected in it, and at the same time making it more pleasing to God. But more than this. "The mind of the priest," says Dom Guéranger (*Explication des Prières et des Cérémonies de la Messe*, p. 73; Solesmes, 1884), "looks beyond the present moment; he thinks of the Host that will be on the altar after the Consecration, that Host which is the only true Holocaust." This explains why, in all the prayers of the Oblation, as in those which precede the Consecration, the Church employs terms which can only be applied by *anticipation* to the first elements of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The expressions *Immaculate Host, Chalice of Salvation, Holy Sacrifices,* and *Sacrifices of Praise* can rigorously be applied only to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

During the *Credo* the corporal has been spread upon the altar by the deacon. The subdeacon, vested with the humeral veil (from the Latin word *humerus*, shoulder), reverently brings to the altar the offerings of bread, followed by an acolyte with the wine. The deacon gives the priest the paten with the host, for it is he who is the deputy of the people and who is charged to present to the celebrant the gifts offered. The paten (from the Latin *patere*, to be wide open) was formerly much larger than it is to-day; it was a real dish, capable of holding several small loaves, which were to be consecrated and distributed. The bread on the paten is called the host (from the Latin *hostia*, victim), because it is soon to become the Body of Christ, the real Victim of the Sacrifice.

The priest receives from the hands of the deacon the paten with the host, and raises it before his eyes; he then looks for an instant upon the cross on the altar, and at once, again, upon the host. He seems to say to God: "Behold, the Victim is prepared; deign to regard it favourably." He casts down his eyes, for he is about to confess himself a sinner. Indeed, whilst he holds the paten with the host in his hands, he prays as follows:

Suscipe, sancte Pater, omnipotens, æterne Deus, hanc immaculatam hostiam, quam ego indignus famulus tuus offero tibi Deo meo vivo et vero, pro innumerabilibus peccatis et offensionibus et negligentiis meis, et pro omnibus circumstantibus, sed et pro omnibus fidelibus christianis vivis atque defunctis ut mihi et illis proficiat ad salutem in vitam æternam. Amen.

Accept, O holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, this immaculate host which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences and negligences, and for all here present, as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may profit both me and them unto life everlasting. Amen.

As we see, the whole prayer of the Oblation is addressed to the Eternal Father. It was to Him that Jesus Christ offered

Himself on earth, and the Church wishes to follow His example. As in the Old Law, the host is without blemish; and it is about to become the sole Victim, immaculate and undefiled, Jesus Christ Himself, Who alone can be pleasing to and can appease Him. Before the living and true God the priest is filled with the thought of his own unworthiness. He must pray first for himself, begging to be cleansed from every stain; for as the host is without blemish, so only pure hands should touch it. He then prays for all present, without exception; finally he prays for the whole Church; both living and dead are to share alike in the virtue of the Sacrifice, the great fruit of which should be that salvation which opens the gates of Heaven.

What a beautiful prayer! Why do we not say it with the priest, why do we not enter into the humble and confident dispositions of the minister of God? It is so short, and yet what a number of requests it expresses! It is all-powerful on the lips and in the heart of him who recites it in union with Christ.

Then, having made the sign of the Cross with the paten on which it lies, the priest lays the host upon the altar. The host is now, as it were, upon the Cross whereon Christ gave Himself as a Victim for us. In some churches was said "*In nomine Patris*," etc., a formula which explains the intervention of the sign of the Cross.

Meanwhile the deacon pours wine into the chalice, the subdeacon afterwards adding a few drops of the water which the celebrant has blessed.

The mixing of wine and water is one of the most ancient rites of the Holy Sacrifice. The Church adopted it in imitation of Jesus Christ, Who in all probability consecrated a chalice which contained, according to Jewish custom, a small quantity of water. This tradition is confirmed by the

early Fathers of the Church—for example, St. Justin, St. Irenæus, and St. Cyprian. Another reason seems to have been to represent by the wine and water the blood and water which flowed from the side of the Saviour when pierced by the spear. In several Western Liturgies, and especially in the Ambrosian rite, while the water is being poured into the chalice, these words are said: "*From the side of Jesus Christ there issued blood and water.*" However, the most profound reason is that revealed in the prayer recited by the priest when he blesses the water:

Deus ✠ qui humanæ substantiæ dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti, da nobis per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium, ejus divinitatis esse consortes, qui humanitatis nostræ fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus, Filius tuus, Dominus noster; qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

O God, Who in creating human nature didst wonderfully dignify it, and hast still more wonderfully reformed it, grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His Divinity, Who deigned to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord; Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

The supernatural work figuratively represented by the mixing of wine and water in the Sacrifice offered by the priest is the mystic union of the faithful with Jesus Christ, their Head and their God. The very first Fathers of the Church seek to elucidate this mystery. St. John, in the Apocalypse, says that the water represents the nations. The wine is figurative of Jesus Christ. From our union with Christ by sanctifying grace—a union which in some way deifies us—there results the formation of the mystical body of the Church, of which the Head is the God-Man and the members are the faithful.

But let us go further still. With relation to the Person of Jesus Christ Himself, the wine particularly represents His Divine nature and the water His human

nature.[1] The mingling of the wine and water recalls the personal union of the Divine Word with the soul and flesh of man. From this first and more profound mystery, proceeds the second—that of our union with the Son of God. Since His Incarnation He is in a certain manner more to us; He is the universal Source of all graces, which are His, and which He has received from His Father to shower upon us. He is the Vine, we the branches, and at the same time He is the nourishing Sap of the Vine. He is truly the Head, we truly the members, of that great body, the Church, in which only those are alive in whom the grace of the Head lives and abides.

Now, as in the Mass Christ becomes the Victim of the Sacrifice, so also the faithful, who are inseparable from Him, are offered in Him and through Him to God, His Father and their Father. This is the sense of the mysterious mixing of the wine and water.

This doctrine may also be deduced from the elements of the Sacrifice, which are the bread and wine. "The holy Fathers," says Bossuet, "have seen in the bread and in the wine a compound of many grains of wheat reduced to a unity, and of the juice of many grapes blended together; and they have regarded this compound as a figure of all the faithful reduced to one single body, to be offered to God in unity of spirit: which led St. Augustine to say that the entire city of the redeemed was the eternal sacrifice of the Holy Trinity" (*Explication de quelques Difficultés sur les Prières de la Messe*).

We must have always before our eyes this deep and

[1] The prayer "*Deus qui humanæ*" at one time belonged only to the Liturgy of Christmas, referring to the mystery of the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ. It was transferred to this place in the Holy Mass, with the addition "*per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium.*" It is very significative. (See Gastoué Noël, the "*Science and Religion*" collection.)

admirable doctrine if we wish to understand the prayers of the Ordinary of the Mass, and especially those of the Canon. "The Church who offers up bread and wine to be made Body and Blood, and who, when they have been consecrated, offers up also this Body and Blood, does so only to accomplish a third oblation in which she offers up herself" (Bossuet).

On beginning the last of the above-mentioned prayers the priest blesses the water, except in Masses for the Dead —an exception which is in accordance with the general principle that in such Masses blessings are not allowed.

In very ancient times the celebrant used to pour the water into the chalice in the form of a cross; it is only since the preceding prayer was introduced that he directly blesses the water. Let us observe that the privilege conferred on the subdeacon of pouring the water at High Mass barely dates from the fourteenth century. Until that time, as is still the custom with the Carthusians, it was the deacon who used to pour the water as well as the wine. For a time, at Rome, it was the priest who did so.

The chalice being prepared, the deacon presents it to the priest, saying with him the following prayer:

Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris, tuam deprecantes clementiam, ut in conspectu divinæ mafestatis tuæ, pro nostra et totius mundi salute, cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Amen.

We offer to Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency, that in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty it may ascend as a sweet odour for our salvation, and for that of the whole world. Amen.

During the recitation of this prayer the priest keeps his eyes fixed upon the cross. The deacon assists in holding up the chalice, saying the prayer with the celebrant; the reason of this is that formerly chalices were very heavy, some weighing as much as ten, fifteen, or twenty

pounds. They had to be larger than ours to hold sufficient wine for the communion of the priest, clergy, and faithful, who all at one time communicated under both species. The deacon, the immediate minister of the priest, helped to raise the chalice. On the other hand, let us always bear in mind that the deacon at the altar represents the people. It is he who has transferred to the celebrant the offering of the faithful; the celebrant and, in the person of the deacon, the faithful will together beseech God graciously to accept the common offering; therefore the formula is in the plural: "*We offer Thee . . .*"

We should notice the expression, "*The chalice of salvation.*" The Church here calls the chalice, by anticipation, the chalice of salvation, for in a short time it will contain the redeeming Blood of Christ, and that alone.

We pray "*for our salvation and for that of the whole world,*" for the aim of Christian life is to possess God. Now, our Sacrifice is the most efficacious prayer to obtain this salvation. St. Epiphanius calls it the "*continual salvation of the Church.*"

The priest places the chalice upon the altar, first forming with it the sign of the Cross, as he did with the paten and host, the reason being the same in both cases.

He places the chalice between the host and the cross of the altar. Until the fifteenth century it was put on the right side and in a straight line with the host, as the Greeks still do. This is merely a matter of convenience.

To prevent anything from falling into it, the deacon re-covers the chalice with the pall, which, as we have explained, is a reduced form of the corporal.

The subdeacon at length receives from the deacon the paten, which he covers with the extremity of the veil worn over his shoulders; he then proceeds to the foot of the altar-

steps, and takes his stand behind the priest. He holds the paten before his eyes till the end of the Pater Noster. We must briefly explain this rubric.

Until the sixth century the paten, just like the chalice, was in continual use during the whole of the Mass. Not only was the Eucharistic Bread consecrated and broken upon it, but it was also allowed to remain there. Since the Host is now placed on the corporal, the paten is not required, except when it is broken, after the Pater Noster. But it was a principle in the early Liturgy to leave nothing on the altar which was not needed for the Sacrifice. Besides these large patens inconvenienced the celebrating priest. What was to be done? The subdeacon was charged to hold the paten, and in some churches even an acolyte fulfilled this office. As an acolyte may not directly touch the sacred vessels, he had to take a scarf or veil. The practice became general, and this is why the subdeacon always wears this vestment. He held the paten up a little to warn the congregation that the time for Communion approached—"*in signum instantis communionis*," as the Paris Missal has it. This custom also has continued. At Masses for the Dead and on Good Friday the paten is left on the altar and is not shown. As we have already said, these liturgical functions have retained more of the simplicity of the ancient Liturgy. Moreover, the people rarely communicated at Masses for the Dead, and on Good Friday, as with us to-day, they never communicated, so there was no need for the large paten.

Finally the priest bows down and, with hands joined and resting on the altar, sums up in a humble prayer the dispositions he must have, and the people with him, if his offering is to be acceptable to God:

In spiritu humilitatis, et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine, et sic fiat sacrificium nostrum in conspectu tuo hodie, ut placeat tibi, Domine Deus.

In the spirit of humility and contrition of heart, let us be received by Thee, O Lord, and grant that the sacrifice we offer this day in Thy sight may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God.

This prayer being finished, the priest, extending and raising his hands, immediately adds :

Veni sanctificator omnipotens, æterne Deus, et benedic ✠ hoc sacrificium, tuo sancto nomini præparatum.

Come, O Sanctifier, Almighty, Eternal God, and bless ✠ this sacrifice, prepared for the glory of Thy holy Name.

At the word *bless* the priest makes the sign of the Cross over the double offering.

All the Liturgies address here the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity ; they ask that the fire of the Holy Spirit may consume the bread and wine and change them into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. He it is Who will produce the Son of God upon the altar, as He once formed His Sacred Body in Mary's womb. Such is the explanation suggested by St. Fulgentius in the sixth century.

The Incensing of the Altar.

At this point takes place the second incensing of the altar. The deacon presents the incense-boat to the celebrant, saying :

Benedicite, Pater Reverende. A blessing, Reverend Father.

The priest blesses the incense, saying :

Per intercessionem beati Michaelis archangeli stantis a dextris altaris incensi, et omnium electorum suorum incensum istud dignetur Dominus bene ✠ dicere, et in odorem suavitatis accipere. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Through the intercession of blessed Michael the Archangel, standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all His elect, may the Lord deign to bless ✠ this incense, and to accept it as an odour of sweetness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The incensing of the oblations is not so ancient in the Latin Church as it is in the Greek. Hincmar of Rheims, however, writing in 850, already mentions it. By the eleventh century it was almost universally practised.

The formula for the third blessing of the incense differs entirely, as we see, from that used at the commencement of the Mass and at the Gospel.

This formula mentions St. Michael the Archangel. St. John, in his vision at Patmos, saw an Angel standing before the altar of Heaven with a golden thurible. The Fathers and the Liturgy have taken this Angel to be St. Michael. Some Churches make mention of St. Gabriel rather, alluding to the narrative of St. Luke (i. 11).

This prayer is very beautiful and in a special manner enhances the blessing of the incense. There is something here besides the altar to be filled with its sweet odour; the gifts thereon must be impregnated with it, and the divine blessing must be allowed to penetrate into them.

Let us repeat that incense is a symbol of our prayers. If the priest incenses the offerings of bread and wine, it is to signify more clearly that our prayers accompany them.

The priest, after receiving the thurible from the hands of the deacon, makes with it thrice the sign of the Cross over the oblations; to saturate them, so to speak, with its perfume, he passes it again three times round the chalice. Meanwhile he says the following prayer:

Incensum istud a te benedictum ascendat ad te, Domine, et descendat super nos misericordia tua.

May this incense, which has been blessed by Thee, ascend to Thee, O Lord, that Thy mercy may descend upon us.

Then he incenses with three triple swings the cross of the altar, reciting meantime this fervent prayer, taken from Psalm cxl.:

Dirigatur, Domine, oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo.

Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight.

Afterwards, as at the beginning of Mass, he incenses again the altar and its relics, continuing the Psalm:

Elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum.

The lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice.

Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiæ labiis meis.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips.

Ut non declinet cor meum in verba malitiæ ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis.	Incline not my heart to evil words to make excuses in sins.

He finally returns the thurible to the deacon, saying:

Accendat in nobis Dominus ignem sui amoris, et flammam æternæ caritatis. Amen.	May the Lord enkindle in us the fire of His love and the flame of His eternal charity. Amen.

The deacon then proceeds to incense the priest and the assistants; which practice is common to all rites. He incenses the priest first, to show reverence to him who here represents the Adorable Person of the Eternal Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord. At Paris the deacon used to kneel while incensing the priest.

Afterwards he advances to incense the choir. This perfume with which he fills the sanctuary is the symbol of Jesus Christ. The grace of this incense should also be offered to the whole Christian people; and so the thurifer will shortly bear it to the faithful. It will enable them to be "*unto God the good odour of Christ*" (2 Cor. ii. 15)—that is, perfect Christians, worthy of making the world appreciate the truths and holy precepts of the Gospel.

At length the subdeacon is incensed, and finally, doubtless out of humility, the deacon receives the grace which he has conveyed to others.

The Lavabo.

The celebrant, after he has been incensed by his minister, remains at the Epistle side of the altar, where he washes his hands—that is, the tips of the thumbs and the index fingers.

Historically, this ceremony is explained by the fact that the priest had received into his hands the offerings of the faithful—at least, this is the explanation generally given. It should be noticed, however, that the rite of the washing of

the hands is anterior to that of the *offering*. Sala, the editor of the learned liturgist Bona, informs us that, before the institution of the *offering*, Bishop and priests, after the Mass of Catechumens, and before their dismissal, imposed hands on the catechumens and public penitents, which rite of itself explains the reason of the washing of hands. This ceremony serves likewise to remind the celebrant that his heart should be pure from every stain. Such also should be the disposition of all who assist at the Holy Sacrifice. In the first centuries of Christianity the faithful used to wash their hands at the fountains which were to be found at the entrances of the churches. All that now remains of this purification is our custom of making a sign of the Cross upon ourselves with holy water on entering a church. In monasteries these fountains were placed in the quadrangle, or *préau*, the small court within the enclosure, which can still be seen in many cases. The water of these fountains was reserved for this symbolical cleansing of the monks.

The ceremony of the washing of the hands takes place at the Epistle side of the altar, as the piscina is at that side. This at one time consisted of a hollow stone.

Meanwhile the priest recites Psalm xxv. from the verse, "*Lavabo inter innocentes . . .*" to the end. The first word of this prayer has always been used to denote the ceremony of the washing of hands. The Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil mention it in their day. In Masses for the Dead and in those of Passion-tide the *Gloria Patri* is omitted, since it is a sign of joy and triumph. We here give this extract from the Psalm; its words reveal to us better than anything else the mysterious meaning of the ceremony:

Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas : et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine,	I will wash my hands among the innocent; and will compass Thy altar, O Lord,

Ut audiam vocem laudis, et enarrem universa mirabilia tua.

Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ, et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.

Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam, et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam,

In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt: dextera eorum replcta est muneribus.

Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum: redime me, et miserere mei.

Pes meus stetit in directo: in ecclesiis benedicam te, Domine.

Gloria Patri, etc.

That I may hear the voice of Thy praise, and tell of all Thy wondrous works.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked, nor my life with bloody men,

In whose hands are iniquities: their right hand is filled with gifts.

But as for me, I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy on me.

My foot hath stood in the direct way; in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Let us unite ourselves with the priest at this precious moment when the great Action is about to commence. Let us recite with faith, humility, and contrition of heart this magnificent Psalm, this earnest prayer: "*I will wash my hands among the innocent, and will compass Thy altar, O Lord. . . .*" No prayer can better dispose us for that sincere and practical detestation of even the least stains of sin.

The Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas.

The priest, having finished the *Lavabo*, goes to the middle of the altar, where, with hands joined and with head bent down, he says the following prayer:

Suscipe, sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem, quam tibi offerimus ob memoriam Passionis, Resurrectionis, et Ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri: et in honorem beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis, et beati Joannis Baptistæ, et sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et istorum, et omnium Sanctorum: ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis

Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation which we make to Thee in memory of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honour of the blessed Mary, ever a virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of these and of all the Saints; that it may be available to their honour, and our salvation; and

autem ad salutem : et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in cœlis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

that they may deign to intercede for us in Heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The above text, which is found substantially the same in the Oriental Liturgies, was originally merely a prayer of devotion ; this explains why many Churches have it not in their Missal. The Carthusians do not say it even now, which proves that in the eleventh century it was not the rule. At first it was recited only on solemn feasts ; it even varied, for on certain days mention was made in it of the sick, the dead, the needs of the Church, of Princes, of priests, etc. St. Pius V. inserted it eventually in the Missal, thus making it of obligation.

This prayer is the last of all those of the Oblation, the elements of which it completely sums up : it mentions the Divine Person to Whom it is offered, the nature of the Holy Sacrifice, the part which the Saints of Heaven should take in it, and the succours which the Church on earth may expect from it.

The oblation we are here dealing with is the anticipated offering of the Divine Victim, Jesus Christ our Lord. This offering is the mystical and unbloody commemoration of His Passion. With this image or repetition of Calvary are also associated His Resurrection and Ascension—the happy effects and glorious reward of the Redemption. The Victim is offered up in honour of the Saints, for whom it is a very great honour to be mentioned here. Mary, the Mother of God, is the first to share in this privilege, and she shares more largely ; then come St. John the Baptist, the greatest of all the children of men ; the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, those pillars of the Church ; the Saints, whose relics repose in the consecrated stone and are thus

identified with the very throne of the Immaculate Lamb; and, finally, all those who, from the time of Abel, have been pleasing to God and have in union with Christ been made victims acceptable in His sight.

O ineffable Sacrifice, who can tell thy greatness? who can comprehend thy value and thy power?

The Orate, Fratres.

The priest kisses the altar, and, turning to the people, extends and then rejoins his hands, saying in a voice a little raised: "*Orate, fratres*—Pray brethren that. . . ."

The Action becomes more and more solemn. The priest feels the need of complete union with God; he is about to enter into the Holy of Holies; therefore does he take leave of the people, towards whom he will not turn again until the Sacrifice has been consummated. "*Brethren, pray,*" for I am about to communicate more intimately with the Lord—pray that He may accept our Sacrifice.

He continues in a low voice:

. . . *ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat apud Deum Patrem omnipotentem.*	. . . that my sacrifice and yours may find acceptance with God the Father Almighty.

These words are simply the development of the priest's invitation to prayer. The author of them was St. Remy of Auxerre (died 908). A similar formula is found in the *Codex Sancti Dionysii*, a manuscript of the time of Charlemagne (768-841). It was only gradually that they were admitted into the Liturgy; this is why the celebrant says them under his breath.

Other forms are met with; for example, the following in a Missal of Utrecht: "*Brothers and sisters, pray for me, a sinner.*" This was pretty generally used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Carthusians still say: "*Brethren,*

pray for me, a sinner, to the Lord our God." We must notice the expression, *My sacrifice and yours*; it clearly shows that the Sacrifice of the priest is also that of the faithful, who offer it with him and through him.

The server—that is, the subdeacon at a Solemn Mass, the deacon at Mass for the Dead (the deacon is then free as at this Mass he has not to incense the choir at the Offertory)—replies:

Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium de manibus tuis ad laudem et gloriam nominis sui, ad utilitatem quoque nostram totiusque Ecclesiæ suæ sanctæ. Amen.

May the Lord receive the Sacrifice from thy hands to the praise and glory of His Name, and to our benefit, and that of His holy Church. Amen.

This beautiful and profound prayer states and briefly sums up the ends of the Sacrifice, which are the honour of God and the benefit of the Church. This formula has been recited in the Roman Church since the thirteenth century. Before that it varied according to the different Churches. For example, sometimes there was said this extract from Psalm xix.: "*May God send thee help from the sanctuary and defend thee out of Sion. May He be mindful of all thy sacrifices, and may thy whole-burnt offering be made fat.*" Or, again, this other beautiful passage from Holy Scripture: "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee*" (Luke i. 35).

To this prayer the priest replies in a low voice, *Amen;* he then recites the Secret.

The Secret.

Originally this prayer was said in the same way as the Collect: the people having prayed for some time in silence, the celebrant spoke aloud to God in the name of all. Later, when the priest ceased to raise his

voice, the *Secret* became the characteristic name for this prayer.

The Secret, with the Collect and the Post-Communion of which we shall speak later on, is one of the principal prayers of the Mass. It is not preceded by an "*Oremus*," as the "*Orate, Fratres*" makes this unnecessary.

This prayer is said in a low voice. The Church retires into *secret* communication with God, says a certain author; her prayer is only heard by Him.

"Almost all the Secrets," says Father Le Brun, "amount to asking God that He would favourably receive the gifts upon the altar, and that He would enable us by His grace to put ourselves into such a state that we also may be presented to Him as a victim pleasing in His sight."

The celebrant ends the Secret, and also the last of the commemorations, if any, with the words, "*Per omnia sæcula sæculorum*—For ever and ever," which are pronounced in a loud voice after the commemorations, or, if there are none, after the Secret.

This conclusion of the prayer here is not, as has been said by some, the beginning of the *Preface*. No; if the rubric directs the priest to raise his voice, it is merely that the people may know the correct moment to say *Amen* in answer to the *Secret*.

There is, moreover, a mystical reason. "The priest," says again the pious Father Le Brun, "like as one coming out of an ecstasy, is eager to induce all present to share in the prayer which he has just recited; he breaks the silence and finishes the secret prayer with that exclamation which invites the whole congregation to be united with him by answering *Amen*. . . . St. Jerome tells us that this *Amen* was heard resounding on all sides in the churches, like a clap of thunder."

According to the ancient *Ordines Romani* and until

the thirteenth century the subdeacons answered the *Amen*,[1] which here suitably ends this part of the Mass—viz., the *Oblation*. It is the Christian people approving of all that has been done, prepared, and said; the moment for the immolation of the Divine Victim is nigh. The Liturgy becomes more recollected and more sublime.

§ 2. From the Preface to the Pater Noster.

We have now reached the most important part of the Holy Sacrifice, the *Consecration*. This part extends from the *Preface* to the *Pater Noster*. We must study it with special care and more ardent piety. What mysteries, illuminations, and revelations are to be found here! May God grant us the grace to profit by them in some measure!

The Preface.

The *Preface* (*præ-fatio*, exordium or foreword) is a solemn introduction to the most sacred portion of the Mass, that called, according to the Greek, the *Canon* or *Rule of the Consecration;* for this reason in olden times it formed part of the Canon. For several centuries it has been detached from it, as may be seen in our Missals, if we look at the text of the *Ordinary of the Mass*. Perhaps this is owing to its form being more liable to change than that of the Canon. However this may be, out of respect for the history of the Liturgy, and especially on account of the deep meaning of the Preface, in our commentary we shall consider it as part of the Canon.

The Preface has received different titles: the Roman Rite calls it the *Preface;* the ancient Gallican Rite the *Contestation*, because in it the powers of Heaven are invoked as witnesses; the Mozarabic Missal names it the *Illation*, because it lifts our hearts towards Heaven; and, finally, the Gallican Liturgy called it the *Immolation*, because

[1] Alexander of Hales tells us so in his *De Sacr. Euchar., Quæst. X.*

it prepares for the immolation of the Victim. The name *Preface* has prevailed in the Roman Church.

The Greek and Armenian Churches have only one Preface for the whole year. The Roman Church had formerly as many Prefaces as feasts ; each indicated the character of the mystery commemorated, to invite the faithful to give thanks to Almighty God. In the *Sacramentary* attributed to Pope St. Leo the Great we find two hundred and sixty-seven Prefaces ; and there must have been many more, for this collection omits those which were recited between January and April. From the twelfth century onwards the Latin rite, until recently, made use of only eleven Prefaces, to which two more have now been added. These Prefaces are : that called the *Common,* which is very ancient, and those for Christmas, the Epiphany, Lent, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, those of the Holy Trinity, the Apostles, and the Holy Cross. In 1095 Urban II. added that of the Blessed Virgin, and in 1917 two others, of St. Joseph and for the Dead, were introduced. Some of the great religious Orders possess another Preface—that of their Holy Founder. And in many dioceses of France a few others, of Advent, of the Blessed Sacrament, etc., are used.

These different Prefaces are read on the feasts to which they are assigned, and during the octaves of the same. That of the Holy Trinity is sung on Sunday, as Sunday is especially consecrated to honouring this mystery. At all other times, the Common Preface is said. As the last-mentioned is the one most frequently used in the Liturgy, we give it here :

Dominus vobiscum,	The Lord be with you.
Et cum spiritu tuo.	And with thy spirit.
Sursum corda.	Lift up your hearts.
Habemus ad Dominum.	We have them lifted up unto the Lord.
Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
Dignum et justum est.	It is meet and just.

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique gratias agere, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem majestatem tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates, Cœli cœlorumque Virtutes ac beata Seraphim socia exultatione concelebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti jubeas deprecamar supplici confessione dicentes : Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, etc. . . .

It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God, through Christ our Lord. By Whom the Angels praise Thy Majesty, the Dominations adore, the Powers tremble before it, the Heavens and the Heavenly Virtues, and the Blessed Seraphim do celebrate with united joy. With whom we beseech Thee to command that our voices be admitted in suppliant confession, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, etc. . . .

A few words of explanation may be added.

After the final words of the Secret, "*Per omnia sæcula sæculorum, Amen,*" the priest continues in a loud voice, "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you," etc., but he does not turn towards the people, for he took leave of them at the *Orate, Fratres.* Besides, in olden times it would have been superfluous to do so, for, immediately before the Preface, the sanctuary doors were closed and the curtains drawn, which made it impossible for the congregation to see the priest. The Armenians still observe this rite. "*Sursum corda*—Lift up your hearts." This exclamation is very ancient. Already, in the third century, St. Cyprian explained it to his people. "The priest," he says, "before beginning the prayer (Canon), prepares the minds of the brethren by this preface: '*Sursum corda*—Lift up your hearts' that the people may be warned by their own reply, '*Habemus ad Dominum*—We have them lifted up unto the Lord,' of the obligation they are under of being occupied solely with God. Let us, then, close our hearts to all else than the Lord, and let us not allow His enemy to approach us whilst we are begging of God His graces."

The priest proceeds: "*Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro*—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God"; and whilst he pronounces these words he raises his eyes to Heaven and joins his hands, expressing by these gestures the ardour of his desires. This invitation to the faithful there clearly indicates the character of the Preface; it is essentially the *eucharistic prayer*, or *prayer of thanksgiving*. We thank God in it for all His benefits, but chiefly for that of the Incarnation, which has given us the means of offering at this moment to God the Father the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of His Divine Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour. The people answer: "*Dignum et justum est*—It is truly meet and just."

The priest, holding his hands raised and extended, proceeds with the Preface in a *becoming and clear voice*, as says the rubric. In Low Masses *it is necessary* that he should be able to be sufficiently heard by the congregation; this is the rule with regard to any part of the Liturgy that at a solemn celebration would be regularly sung.

Then the priest, approving what the congregation has just replied, says: "*It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee*"; but no act of thanksgiving is more worthy of God the Father than that which rises up to Him through His only Son, Jesus Christ.

The rest of the Preface is penetrated with this last thought: Jesus Christ is our Head, our Sovereign Mediator; He is likewise the Head of the heavenly hosts, for in Him, as St. Paul says, the Angels have been created (Col. i. 16); with us they form the complete and perfect body of His Church; from Him, as their Head, they derive all their sanctity and glory. At this solemn moment they are united with us in order to celebrate the mercy of the Lamb, Who comes once again to take away the sins of the world. Let us in humility and fear say with them the *Sanctus*.

The Sanctus.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.	Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

All the Liturgies, both Eastern and Western, have the *Sanctus* at Mass; but it occurs in different places, and is accompanied by more or fewer words. With the Greeks it is the *Trisagion*, a hymn consecrated to the Holy Trinity. This has been called the *Hymn of Victory*, because the words, which follow the thrice-repeated *Sanctus*, express the majesty and invincible power of God.

The *Sanctus* was introduced into the Mass at a very early date. The Fifth Catechetical Instruction of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (347-348), the Liturgy of Serapion, and that of the Apostolic Constitutions, are among the first to mention the *Sanctus* in connection with the Mass. Some ancient Capitularies (A.D. 786) observe "that the priest will unite himself with the Holy Angels and with the people of God, that all may sing with one voice the *Sanctus*." Later it was considered sufficient, as nowadays it is, for the priest to recite it in a low voice, no doubt because of the long modulations with which the hymn was embellished. In any case, he could not commence the Canon until the choir had finished.

At the *Sanctus* a little bell is rung to warn the congregation that the priest is about to commence the great and solemn part of the Mass—viz., the *Canon*, during which the Consecration will take place. The *Sanctus* is a profession of faith, for it teaches the Unity of God and the Trinity of the Divine Persons: "*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of hosts.*" These are the hosts of the *heavenly army*. Finally, in the verse

which terminates the Sanctus confession is made of the Incarnation and Redemption. *Hosanna* is a Hebrew word which signifies *Save us, I beseech you.* All three Divine Persons indeed co-operate in the work of our Redemption, through Jesus Christ, "*the Blessed One Who came in the Name of the Lord.*"

The priest makes the sign of the Cross whilst saying the words "*Benedictus qui venit. . . .*" According to ancient liturgists, it was the rule to make the sign of the Cross when reciting texts taken from the Holy Gospel.

The Canon.

We have now reached the *Canon* of the Mass, which is the most solemn and most mysterious portion of the Holy Sacrifice. The word *Canon* is derived from the Greek, and signifies *rule.* It is, in other words, the formula which must invariably be followed in the consecration of the elements of bread and wine.

The *Canon* has received divers names. St. Augustine calls it "The prayer *par excellence,*" because by it is asked the supreme gift, Jesus Christ Himself. It has also been called the *Action,* and the *Mystery of the Most Holy Action,* from the Latin expression *agere causam,* to plead a cause. Indeed what is the priest about to do but to plead in the person of Christ the cause of the universal Church ?

This prayer is very ancient; it underwent certain changes under the Popes, Leo I. and Gregory the Great, and was also added to, as we shall see in due time. We must leave to learned liturgists the most interesting study of its formation and final wording, for such a subject would lead us away from our purpose.

It would take too long to comment in detail on each of these magnificent and profound prayers. We shall confine ourselves to giving an explanation of some of their

expressions and accompanying ceremonies. But first, to show the close connection between them all, and to set in relief the fundamental idea of this prayer of prayers, the Canon—so admirably one, in spite of the changes it underwent during the first centuries—we shall give here the simple and luminous *résumé* made by the learned liturgist, Callewaert, from whom we have already so often quoted (*Collationes Brugenses*, vol. xiii., 139):

"We therefore humbly pray Thee, most merciful Father, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless and accept these gifts, which we offer Thee in the first place for the good of the whole Church Militant, and in particular for the Pope and the Bishop (*Te igitur*), for the faithful specially recommended, and for the congregation (*Memento*) in communion with the Church Triumphant, which we beg to help us (*Communicantes*). Deign through this Victim to give us peace here below, and in eternity salvation (*Hanc igitur*); deign also to accept and ratify this oblation, that it may be made for us the Body and Blood of Thy Son (*Quam oblationem*), Who instituted this Sacrifice which we efficaciously renew through the repetition of the Divine words of its institution, by which is wrought the transubstantiation (*Qui pridie*). We, mindful of the commands of Jesus (*Hæc quotiescumque*), offer up to Thee this Victim in memory of His Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension (*Unde et memores*), beseeching Thee to accept it as Thou wast graciously pleased to accept the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech (*Supra quæ*), that, being carried to Thy altar on high, it may be the source of every blessing for ourselves (*Supplices*), and the cause of deliverance for the faithful departed (*Memento*), with whom we desire, though sinners, to be associated in the fellowship of Thy Saints in Heaven—not, indeed, through our own merits (*Nobis quoque*), but through those of Jesus

Christ our Lord, by Whom Thou dost sanctify and give us these gifts (*Per Christum*), through Whom, with Whom and in Whom Thou receivest all honour and glory, for ever and ever (*Per ipsum*).

"Prepared and introduced by that admirable *prayer of thanksgiving*, the Preface, the Canon is, then, above all a *Prayer of Impetration*. There is found in it throughout the same ardent and reiterated supplication, beseeching God, not so much to work the mystery of Transubstantiation, as efficaciously to accept the Sacrifice *by rendering it salutary for us* and by realizing all the purposes for which it is offered."

Let us now make a closer study of the *Canon*. The priest raises his hands and eyes towards Heaven, for throughout the whole of the Canon he is going to speak to God the Father. He lowers them immediately after, and bows down in the posture of a suppliant. He then kisses the altar, a fresh sign of respect and love ; this is the last time he does so before the precious moment when the consecrated stone will become the throne of our Victim, Jesus Christ. Meanwhile he has begun the *Te igitur*.

Te igitur, clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum Filium tuum, Dominum nostrum, supplices rogamus, ac petimus uti accepta habeas, et benedicas, hæc ✠ dona, hæc ✠ munera, hæc ✠ sancta sacrificia illibata, in primis, quæ tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica : quam pacificare, custodire, adunare, et regere digneris toto orbe terrarum, una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N. et Antistite nostro N. et omnibus orthodoxis, atque catholicæ, et apostolicæ fidei cultoribus.

We, therefore, humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept and bless these ✠ gifts, these ✠ presents, these ✠ holy unspotted sacrifices, which in the first place we offer Thee for Thy holy Catholic Church, to which vouchsafe to grant peace, as also to protect, unite, and govern it throughout the world, together with Thy servant N. our Pope, N. our Bishop, as also all orthodox believers and professors of the Catholic and Apostolic faith.

As children we used to be puzzled by the large picture which we saw suddenly appear at this moment in the Missal —namely, that representing Jesus crucified. The explanation of it is that the Canon of the Mass begins with the word "*Te.*" Now, the capital "T" represents a cross, and it appears that our Lord's Cross was in form like a Greek T or *tau*. At an early date delight was taken in ornamenting in the Missals this first letter of the Canon. It was illuminated with splendid miniatures, and there was even placed on the "T" the image of our crucified Lord. Not content with that, but wishing to represent the very scene of the Crucifixion, the illuminators were obliged to enlarge the picture, which finally became independent of the text, occupying a separate page, as in our modern Missals.

Let us now return to our prayer. As a learned liturgist (Thomas Bernard, *Cours de Liturgie Romaine: La Messe*) says, in it the priest begs from God an ever increasing sanctification of the gifts offered, and prays to obtain the *general* fruit accruing from the Sacrifice, which is that reserved for the whole Church.

At the words, "*We beseech Thee . . . that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept and bless these gifts, these presents, these holy unspotted sacrifices,*" the priest makes the sign of the Cross three times over the host and chalice: he it is who prays, but it is God Who must bless. It must be said that the signs of the Cross made by the priest throughout the Holy Sacrifice over the offerings are mostly of rather recent institution. Sometimes they are really made for the purpose of blessing, at other times they do nothing more than express by their form, though they do so more emphatically, the idea of blessing contained in such or such a word. Again, the rubrics order the sign of the Cross, it would seem, when the offering is particularly designated by the demonstrative pronouns *hæc, hanc*, etc. . . . And what

sign indeed could be more fittingly used for this designation than that of the Cross? Some liturgists say that these signs denote the source whence flow the benedictions solicited from God at Mass—namely the Cross. They also signify, they add, especially after the consecration, that the God Who is immolated on the mystic table is the very same Who once immolated Himself upon the Altar of the Cross.

The sign of our salvation is made by the priest three times over the holy offerings—three times, for these oblations are *gifts*, which have come from God; *presents*, which we give back to Him; and *holy unspotted sacrifices*, which have been set apart from every profane use, and which are destined to become the Body of the Immaculate Lamb.

The priest prays for the whole Church. As we are aware, the entire Church receives a part of the fruits which flow from every Holy Sacrifice that is celebrated. The faithful, then, who are in a state of grace, participate in the millions of Masses which are daily offered throughout the world. This is what is called the *general fruit* of the Holy Sacrifice. Let us sometimes think of this, and when we offer to God our worship, our thanksgivings, our requests, and our satisfactions, let us do so united in spirit with all the priests of the whole world.

But the great grace which the Church begs is *peace*—"*Quam pacificare . . . digneris*"—that peace which protects, unites, and conducts souls to the haven of salvation, under the guidance of the Supreme Pastor, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the father of the great family of God.

Mention is made at this point of the Sovereign Pontiff. The custom of alluding in the Mass to the reigning Pope is a very ancient one. The omission of his name was, as early as the fifth century, considered a grievous fault; the

Councils made its mention a rigorous precept. When the Pope says Mass, he mentions himself, saying, "*With me, Thine unworthy servant.*" The Bishop of the diocese must next be named. As the Sovereign Pontiff is the centre of unity of all the Churches, so the Bishop is the centre of unity of his whole flock, which with him forms, as it were, a Church within the great Church. Hence it is fitting to pray for him. When he celebrates, he, like the Pope, calls himself, "*Thine unworthy servant.*"

Before the reform of the Missal in the sixteenth century mention was likewise made in the prayer, *Te igitur*, of the reigning Prince. He it is who holds the sword for the defence of the Christian people; therefore he has a right to our gratitude and prayers. However, this is not done nowadays without a special apostolic indult. The prayer for the King or the Republic is said in our countries at the end of High Mass on Sundays. We shall be doing a very useful thing if we remember them during Mass itself.

Finally, in a general formula, the minister of God mentions all who profess the Catholic and Apostolic faith.

In the prayer, *Te igitur*, the fruit of the Mass was applied in a *general* manner to the Church; in the prayer called the *Memento* the priest *especially* prays for certain designated persons.

There is a double *Memento* or remembrance of the faithful at Mass—that of the living before the Consecration, and that of the dead after the Consecration. The first runs thus:

Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N., et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio; pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se, suisque omnibus; pro redemp-

Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, N. and N.; and of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known unto Thee; for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise for themselves, their families

tione animarum suarum, pro spe salutis, et incolumitatis suæ: tibique reddunt vota sua æterno Deo, vivo et vero.

and friends; for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of their safety and salvation, and who pay their vows to Thee, the eternal, living, and true God.

The commemoration of the living at Mass, as well as that of the dead, is very ancient, even dating back to Apostolic times. The origin of the former is this: those who had the Holy Sacrifice specially offered up used to present their gifts at the Offertory, in order that the fruit of the Mass might be particularly applied to them. Their names were written on diptychs, or tablets with double columns, on one of which were inscribed the names of the living, on the other those of the dead. When the celebrant had said, "*Memento, Domine*—Be mindful, O Lord of Thy servants, men and women," the deacon in a loud voice, from the ambo, read these names to the celebrant and to the assembled congregation. Benefactors of both sexes, and all who for any special reason deserved to be remembered, were likewise named. St. Jerome in one of his writings deplores the vanity of some of the faithful, who were wont to offer gifts for the purpose of hearing themselves publicly named by the deacon. Therefore from the eighth century the priest merely read them in silence; later, in the twelfth century, the diptychs disappeared. There now only remain in the Missal the two letters "N. N.," which stand for *names*. These are to recall to the celebrant the intention of the Mass. It is at this moment the priest prays for the intention of the living, particularly for the one for whom he celebrates the Mass. To this *primary* and *special* intention he may add other *secondary* ones—which is the general practice. What fruit we can gather from this privilege! What a privilege it is indeed to be mentioned or thought of by a priest when he is about to

accomplish the most awe-inspiring and the most sacred of possible acts. Ah, if only more faith were ours!

The priest continues. He prays for the congregation. Theology teaches us that all who are present have a very special right to the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice, but that those assisting at the altar, as the ministers or the server, have a still greater claim to them. We shall learn one day, perhaps too late, what one more Mass, heard with *faith* and *devotion*—which are the two conditions named in the *Memento*—would have been worth with regard to eternity.

The celebrant specifies other persons still; in fact, he forgets no one. He has spoken of the congregation in general; he now recommends along with them *all who are dear to them.* For all he begs *redemption, salvation,* and even *bodily health.* He is quite confident of being heard, for he addresses his prayer to the *living and true God.*

We have now reached the *Communicantes.* This prayer has not always exactly the same wording throughout the whole liturgical year. The five greater feasts of Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, and Whit-Sunday, together with their octaves, have respectively their proper *Communicantes.* But the only difference in them is a brief mention of the mystery celebrated. For the convenience of daily use, these five prayers, being seldom wanted, are not inserted in the body of the *Canon,* but just after the *Proper Prefaces* for the above feasts. It is there that, on the prescribed days, the priest turns to find them. The two words, *Infra Actionem,* printed between the *Proper Preface* and *Communicantes* warn the priest that into the *Action* or *Canon* he will have to introduce a special prayer. This same indication, *Infra Actionem,* appearing before the ordinary *Communicantes,* serves as a marker and

reminds the priest of the change that must be made. The following is the usual form :

Communicantes, et memoriam venerantes, in primis gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi ; sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreæ, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomæ, Jacobi, Philippi, Bartholomæi, Matthæi, Simonis et Thaddæi : Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Joannis, et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damiani, et omnium Sanctorum tuorum ; quorum meritis, precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuæ muniamur auxilio. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Communicating with, and honouring in the first place, the memory of the ever glorious and Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ ; as also of the blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all Thy Saints ; by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us observe that the word *communicantes*, which signifies *participating in one and the same communion*, in order to be rightly understood, should be taken together with the preceding prayer—that is, with the *Memento*. The sense, then, is : We offer Thee this sacrifice for these and those persons . . . *we who are in communion* by prayer and supplication with the members of the Church Militant and those of the Church Triumphant, the *Holy Apostles and Martyrs*, etc.

What does this prayer say ?

The priest has recommended to God the whole Church, then some particular persons, and finally all those present. They are all named before the throne of God, those who suffer and are in need as well as those who actually offer to the Lord the great Sacrifice of praise and supplication. And now the sacred minister summons around his altar the Church of Heaven to join in the prayers, joys, and canticles of the Church on earth. The words of

the *Imitation of Christ* (Book IV., c. 5) occur here to our minds : " When a priest celebrates, he honours God, gives joy to the Angels, and edifies the Church." The Saints see in the Sacrifice about to be offered the Sacrifice of the Cross ; they recognize in it that which has been for them the sole source of all their grace and glory. They, moreover, honour God, and pray to Him for us. This is true, first of all, of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, also of the Holy Apostles and Martyrs of the primitive Church, and, in fact, of the Saints of all ages. They implore for us the *protection of God*, for nothing is more necessary for a man, either for body or for soul.

The list of Saints mentioned in the *Communicantes* is closed, and may not be changed without a decree from the Sovereign Pontiff. It may surprise some not to find in it the name of St. Joseph, the holy spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and the great protector of the Church. He is neither mentioned there, nor in the *Confiteor*, because devotion to this illustrious Saint was originally less developed, Providence having reserved it for later times.

We now come to the more solemn prayers which precede the Consecration. They are of a more ardent and tender nature. God is nearer to man. Let us be more recollected and pray more earnestly.

Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ, sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ, quæsumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias : diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab æterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept this oblation of our servitude, as also of Thy whole family; dispose our days in Thy peace, command us to be preserved from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thy elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In ancient Missals the above prayer is preceded by the title *Infra Actionem*, as is the case with the *Communicantes*, and for the same reason. The Missal still

contains nowadays three proper *Hanc igiturs :* one for Holy Thursday, and one for each of the feasts of Easter and Pentecost with their octaves. They differ very little from the ordinary *Hanc igitur*, only containing slight additions, referring on Maundy Thursday to the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, and on the other two feasts and during their octaves to the newly baptized ; as we know, it was formerly on the eves of Easter and Pentecost that adults were solemnly baptized. Variations of the *Hanc igitur* were once more numerous ; there were special forms for the Third Sunday in Lent, the anniversary of the day on which one received the priesthood, the dedication of a church, the consecration of a virgin, the anniversary of a birth or of a marriage, and Masses for the dead. All these have now disappeared, leaving only the three *Hanc igiturs* we have mentioned.

While reciting the prayer, the priest holds his hands joined and extended over the chalice and the host. This rite, which dates from the year 1500 and which became an almost universal practice in the sixteenth century, was sanctioned by St. Pius V. in his reform of the Missal. It is, then, of comparatively recent origin. Previously to the fifteenth century the priest used to hold his hands raised, as during the preceding prayers. In some Churches the priest bent down profoundly, bowing his head as low as the altar, to signify the profound abasement of Jesus Christ in His Passion. The modern rite, it must be admitted, has a still greater signification. Does not the priest appear especially and earnestly to call the attention of the Lord to " this offering—*hanc . . . oblationem,*" which he points out to Him? But the conception of sacrifice and the ritual prescriptions of Holy Scripture reveal to us a more profound symbolism. Sinful man ought to lay himself upon the altar, ready to be immolated for the expiation of his crimes. But

the God-Man is the only Victim that can appease the Divine wrath. The offering, then, represents, on the one hand, the faithful, on the other, Christ. It was so already in the Old Law. The Jewish priest laid his hand upon the victim to testify that he wished to substitute it for himself, the sacrificer, and for the sinners who offered it up as an expiation or a holocaust. Under the régime of the new priesthood, the priest, acting for himself and for the people whom he represents, lays his hands upon the chalice and the host, as though upon the head of Jesus Christ, Who invites us to load Him with our faults, and to recognize that He alone can merit for us pardon for our sins.

We will now say a few words about the prayer itself. Our Roman Missal allows us clearly enough to understand that the words "*oblationem servitutis nostræ*" ("the oblation of our servitude") denote especially the part taken in the offering by the priest and his ministers officiating at the altar, while the words "*cunctæ familiæ tuæ*" (the oblation "of thy whole family") denote principally the part of the faithful.

In this prayer we ask for *peace*—not that of the world, but that which consists in the interior possession of God by grace. We ask in it "*to be preserved from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thy elect*"; for is not this the final end of our existence, and is it not necessary that Jesus should expiate for us, who are powerless to do so, the sins that hinder us upon our way?

And now we have come to the last of the prayers preceding the Consecration: the *Quam oblationem*. The priest here prays that the oblation offered to God may produce all its fruits, and that the great miracle of Transubstantiation may be wrought.

Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quæsumus, bene✝dictam, ad✝scriptam, ra✝tam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris, ut nobis Cor✝pus, et San✝guis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui, Domini nostri Jesus Christi.

Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all things to make blessed, approved, ratified, reasonable, and acceptable, that it may be made for us the Body and Blood of Thy most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

We notice in the Latin text five crosses between the syllables of as many words. The three first direct the priest to make the sign of salvation over the chalice and host both together, the two last to make it separately over the bread and the wine. Then follows : " *Fiat*—That it may be made. . . ."

What is the reason of these five signs of the Cross ?

Let us here recall to mind what we have said above concerning the signs of the Cross at Mass ; perhaps we shall there find an explanation. We now approach the Consecration. The above prayer is so closely connected with that most holy act that several authors have considered it as even forming part of the rite of consecration. It is more correct to say that it completes the four preceding ones, but at the same time serves as an introduction to the most important and therefore the most solemn act of the Mass. A great favour is asked from God : the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Now the Church begs great favours only through the merits of the Cross of Jesus ; therefore does she make that holy sign over the oblation. Once the sign of the Cross was made at each of the words qualifying the oblation—that is, at *benedictam* (blessed by God), *adscriptam* (approved by Him), *ratam* (ratified, approved and confirmed in Heaven), *rationabilem* (reasonable, because this oblation will soon be Christ Himself, Who will deign to associate us with Him as reasonable victims—Rom. xii. 1), *acceptabilem* (acceptable, a thing

pleasing to God the Father). . . . For a long time it has been thought sufficient to make only three signs of the Cross, doubtless in honour of the Blessed Trinity, for each Divine Person co-operates in this great miracle. The signs of the Cross made at the words *Body* and *Blood* are easily intelligible: is not the change of these substances the greatest miracle that can be wrought, and will it not represent in the most vivid manner possible the immolation of Golgotha?

The Church beseeches—and we should note the expression—that this offering may be made *for us* the Body and Blood of God, which means, as Dom Guéranger says, "that they may be placed at our disposal and become our food" (*Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 142).

"The simplicity with which we beg for the great miracle of Transubstantiation," says Father Chaignon (*The Priest at the Altar*, p. 216), "is similar to that which makes Holy Scripture so sublime when it records the power of God in the act of Creation: '*Let there be light; and there was light*' (Gen. i. 3); and in the no less wonderful miracle of the Incarnation of the Word in the womb of Mary: '*Be it done to me according to Thy word*' (Luke i. 38); '*And the Word was made flesh*' (John i. 14)."

We are now prepared for the great visit that the earth is expecting; we have reached the summit of Calvary, and are about to see rise before our ravished gaze the crucified Jesus. This is also a Mount Thabor we have climbed, where we shall soon behold Jesus, and Him alone. How are we spending our time? "Do you think," says St. John Chrysostom, "that you are still on the earth, or do you not rather believe that you are lifted up to Heaven? O miracle! O goodness! He Who is seated on the right hand of the Father will in an instant be in our very hands, about to give Himself to those who wish to receive Him" (*De Sacerd.*, L. iii.).

The Consecration is the most solemn moment of the Holy Sacrifice. All that precedes and is going to follow forms a crown around this great act—the greatest of miracles, as St. Thomas Aquinas calls it.

That we may rightly understand the ceremonies of the Consecration we must not forget that at this moment, more than at any other, the principal priest is Jesus Christ. The person of the minister hides from our sight, so to say; he will, without doubt, consecrate, but the principal priest is Jesus. This thought explains the form of consecration for each of the species: the priest here does something more than narrate the Gospel account of the Last Supper; his language is truly effective, and is applied to the matter present on the altar. We will briefly detail the two Consecrations.

The Consecration of the Bread.—The priest wipes his thumbs and index fingers on the corporal, lest they may be moist. The Church reminds him especially how spotless his soul and body ought to be. "The hands which so often touch the Creator of Heaven and earth ought to be pure, and frequently raised to Heaven," says the *Imitation of Christ* (Book IV., chap. ii.).

Then he says:

Qui pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, et elevatis oculis in cœlum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, bene-✠dixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite, et manducate ex hoc omnes.

Who the day before He suffered took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up towards Heaven, to Thee, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed it, brake it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this.

This *Qui pridie* is a narrative addressed to the Father of Jesus Christ, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. The priest, with feeling, recalls in it the rite which the Master Himself observed when He instituted the Holy

Mysteries. This rite is not completely given in the Holy Gospels, but has been handed down to us by tradition, and is found in the most ancient Liturgies—namely, those of St. James, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and even in those of Serapion and the Apostolic Constitutions.

With Jesus the priest takes bread into his holy and venerable hands; he raises his eyes to Heaven, to the Father Who receives the Sacrifice; he gives thanks, he blesses. The holy bread was broken and distributed at this moment at the Last Supper; the Liturgy, however, defers these ceremonies until later. We should notice that the priest here leans upon the altar, which position brings his face nearer to the host, and thus helps him to fix more easily his attention, and to pronounce more fervently the most holy words of consecration. Then, wholly one with Jesus, he says:

HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM. FOR THIS IS MY BODY.

The mystery has been accomplished. . . . *Credo, Domine*—I believe, O Lord. . . .

I believe, My Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou art indeed present on the altar, true God and true Man, with Thy Body, Thy Blood, Thy Soul, and Thy Divinity. I adore Thee, and I say to Thee once more, with the poet of the Eucharist:

"O memoriale mortis Domini,
Panis vivus, vitam præstans homini,
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere,
Et te illi semper dulce sapere."

"O thou memorial of the Lord's own dying;
O living bread, to mortals life supplying,
Make thou my soul henceforth on Thee to live,
And ever a taste of heavenly sweetness give!"

To show their faith, the Greeks answer three times: "*Amen*—It is so."

The priest immediately genuflects and adores the Sacred

Host, which he then raises so that it may be seen by the attentive and recollected congregation. All the Greek and Latin Churches are convinced that, after the Consecration, the Angels surround the altar to adore their God. Thus Heaven and earth are blended into one before the Holy of Holies.

The Greek Liturgies place the elevation of the Host just before the Communion. In the Oriental Church, from the commencement of the Canon, the altar was hidden by curtains, which were drawn back before the Communion to allow the priest to present the Sacred Species for adoration. Neither has the Latin Church always observed the existing custom. Mabillon himself confesses his ignorance as to when the Roman Church adopted the rite of the elevation (*cf.* Georgii, *De Liturgia Romani Pontificis*, vol. iii., p. 71). Until the twelfth century the only elevation was that which is now called the *Little Elevation;* this is hardly noticeable, and is made immediately before the *Pater Noster*, at the words of the Canon : "*Omnis honor et gloria.*" The heresy of Berengarius, who dared to doubt the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, gave rise, it is said, to the elevation directly after the Consecration. It was introduced as a solemn protest against the heresiarch, and as an express profession of faith in the Real Presence. This custom began, it seems, about the year 1100. Hildebert, Bishop of Mans, who at first had seemed to favour the heresy, introduced, we are told, the new rite, which the Carthusians, even during the lifetime of St. Bruno, their founder, and the monastic Orders immediately adopted. It soon became a universal practice, Rome having borrowed it from the Church of France.

The elevation also of the chalice seems to have been in use as early as the twelfth century, but evidence with regard to the matter is scanty (*cf.* Hugh of St. Victor,

Speculum Ecclesiæ,[1] chap. vii.). However, it was not generally established until later times—that is, until the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Neither the *Ordinary* of the Premonstratensians, nor the Statutes of Citeaux (1215), nor those of the Guillemite monks (1279), make any mention of this elevation. The Carthusians even nowadays omit it. The reason of this is very simple : the Ancient Statutes of the Order of Citeaux (confirmed in 1259) order that from the elevation of the Host until after the consecration of the chalice one must remain bowed down ; and such was the ordinary practice of the faithful. This prostration naturally made the raising of the chalice useless, since no one would see it. Moreover, the shape of the old chalice, the cup of which was less deep and wider than ours, rendered this elevation dangerous.

But we reproduce here from the *Collationes Brugenses* (vol. xiii., p. 141) a further explanation given by Father Thurston, S.J. (*cf. The Tablet :* October 19, 1907, " The Lifting of the Host "; October 26, 1907, " Showing the Host "; November 2, 1907, " Seeing the Host "). " Some Doctors of the University of Paris, among others the Chancellors Peter the Chanter (†1179) and Petrus Comestor, taught that the transubstantiation of the bread only takes place at the same time as that of the wine—that is, when the words of the second consecration have been pronounced. The adversaries of this opinion, which was soon abandoned, began, as a sign of protestation, to adore the Host by genuflecting before it, and to elevate it in such a manner that the people also could see and adore it immediately after the consecration of the bread. Soon the same thing was done after the consecration of the chalice. It was Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris between 1196-1208, who gave the first ordinance for this practice ; but in the first half of

[1] Mabillon attributes this work to Robert Paululus (1184).

the thirteenth century it was adopted and reproduced in many other places, and the custom soon became general."

Out of respect for the Real Presence, a rubric orders that an extra candle should be lit at the Elevation, and not be extinguished until after the Communion. This practice still exists in some places. At High Mass it is observed during the double Elevation; at Ferial and Requiem Masses, in which the Liturgy has more faithfully kept its ancient rites, the torch-bearers do not retire with their candles until after the Communion. This practice dates back to the thirteenth century, to the epoch when the rite of elevating the Lord's Body and Blood had universally spread. The people used to be most eager to see the Sacred Host, sometimes attaching to this sight an exaggerated efficacy. The lights helped them to see it. When the thurifer or subdeacon incenses during the Elevation, he does so from the Epistle side, precisely in order not to hinder the people from seeing (*Collationes Brugenses*, t. xiv., p. 671).

The custom of ringing the big church bell at the Elevation dates from the very introduction of the new rite. In the twelfth century the *Statutes* of the Carthusians, the *Ordinary* of the Premonstratensians, the *Customs* of the Camaldolese, ordered the church bell to be rung at the elevation of the Host. The above-mentioned Customs (1105) prescribed that all those who were then in their cells, or in the enclosure of the hermitage, or outside their cells, and heard this bell, should kneel wherever they conveniently could, to pray and adore God as long as the bell rang. The use of the small bell at the altar dates from the same period. At the Elevation the deacon or server of the Mass raises a little the extremity of the chasuble of the celebrant. Nowadays there is hardly any longer a reason for this; but when formerly large chasubles were used which covered the whole body, it was difficult for the

celebrant to lift his arms, unless aided by the minister, who facilitated his movements by raising the chasuble.

Let us finally remark that, contrary to the almost universal custom, it is fitting to look at the Sacred Host at the moment of the Elevation. It is for this purpose that the priest lifts it up.[1] As soon as we have seen it, we should modestly bow our heads until the consecration of the chalice.

The Consecration of the Wine.—The ceremonies accompanying the consecration of the wine are very like those of the consecration of the bread; the form of consecration, however, is longer and more explanatory:

Simili modo postquam cœnatum est, accipiens et hunc præclarum calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, item tibi gratias agens, bene ✠ dixit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite, et bibite ex eo omnes: HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI, NOVI ET ÆTERNI TESTAMENTI: MYSTERIUM FIDEI: QUI PRO VOBIS ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.

In like manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, likewise giving Thee thanks, He blessed, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and drink ye all of this: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT: THE MYSTERY OF FAITH: WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU, AND FOR MANY TO THE REMISSION OF SINS.

Yes, in the chalice there is the Blood of Jesus, the Blood which has sealed the new and never-ending alliance between God and man. It is, *par excellence*, the Mystery of Faith, that of the Blood of a God poured out for many—that is, for all. *Multis* (many) expresses more than *omnes* (all), one author says, since a *whole* need not necessarily be a great number. This Blood is shed for the remission of our sins.

When the priest has pronounced the sacramental words over the chalice, which he is holding in his hands, he lays

[1] His Holiness Pius X. has granted an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines to the faithful each time they devoutly look upon the Sacred Host, at the moment of the elevation, and say "My Lord and My God" (June 12, 1907).

it down, and whilst he genuflects to adore the Precious Blood, he says these words of Jesus :

Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis. — As often as ye do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of Me.

He then elevates the Chalice, which the faithful ought to look upon and adore. The above words, once addressed to the Apostles, Christ each day repeats to His priests ; they remind them and us of the commemorative though actually real character of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is only since the end of the fifteenth century that the celebrant recites them at this moment. Before then they were said over the Chalice, immediately after the words of consecration, or during the elevation, or after it ; the custom varied. The *O Salutaris* used to be sung during the Elevation itself, but for a long time now this has been forbidden ; the Sacred Congregation of Rites renewed this prohibition, April 26, 1901. Perfect silence must reign during this holy time ; the organ, however, may be heard, but the *Ceremonial of Bishops* requires that the pieces played should be more serious and soft (*graviori et dulciori sono*).

Jesus Christ is now really present on the altar. More than ever it is He Who recites the prayers that follow by the mouth of His representative. What, then, must be their efficacy ?

A difficulty occurs here. It may be asked why, after the consecration of the bread and wine, the priest continues to speak of the Body and Blood of Christ, to treat and bless it, as if it were still a simple offering, like the gifts made at the oblation. Before the Consecration he said, " *These gifts, these presents,*" etc. ; after the Consecration he still says, " *upon which gifts vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance . . .*" and still blesses

them. Only one new rite is introduced—the priest honours the Real Presence by genuflections.

A learned liturgist—Desloge—answers this apparent difficulty in the following manner: "Why is the term *hæc*, meaning *these gifts*, used here? Because the Church is dealing with a Sacrament, and regards the Host solely through the sacramental veil. That which is present upon the altar both before and after the Consecration is an offering." And farther on he says: "We must look for the literal and true liturgical reason in the conception we have given of the Christian Sacrifice: the priest exercises his ministry on a Sacrament, and the Host signified by this Sacrament demands to be treated in accordance with all the conditions of a Host from one end of the Action to the other. Thus the signs of the Cross which come after the Consecration are to be explained in the same way as those which preceded it. In both cases the priest beseeches God graciously to accept the Host, and to draw for mankind an abundant blessing from its inexhaustible virtue. And in what rite could the sign of the Cross be more suitably used than in Holy Mass, which, in the words of Holy Church, accomplishes the work of our Redemption?" (*cf.* Desloge, *Studies on the Signification of Liturgical Things*, pp. 365-368).

This explanation of the sign of the Cross does not weaken that given in the earlier part of our work (see p. 101).

In the first prayer, *Unde et Memores*, mention is made of the Passion; this it was that led some priests in the thirteenth century to hold their arms extended in the form of a cross at this point, which is still the practice with the Carthusians, Carmelites, and Dominicans. This custom has *never* been introduced at Rome. The priest holds his hands raised, which is a natural attitude for prayer, and one of great antiquity.

Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, ejusdem Christi Filii tui Domini nostri tam beatæ Passionis, necnon et ab inferis Resurrectionis, sed et in cœlos gloriosæ Ascensionis, offerimus præclaræ Majestati tuæ de tuis donis, ac datis, Hostiam ✠ puram, Hostiam ✠ sanctam, Hostiam ✠ immaculatam, Panem ✠ sanctum vitæ æternæ, et Calicem ✠ salutis perpetuæ.

Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed Passion of the same Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, His Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension into Heaven, offer unto Thy most excellent Majesty, of Thy gifts and presents bestowed upon us a pure Host, a holy Host, an unspotted Host, the holy Bread of eternal life, and Chalice of everlasting salvation.

The priest, united with the faithful, acknowledges in this prayer the sovereign dominion of God over all things, and in particular over these gifts that have been offered and transformed.

The conjunction *unde* (wherefore) shows the close and immediate connection there is between this prayer and the preceding one : Jesus Christ ordered His priests to offer to the Divine Majesty the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, *wherefore* they obey Him. *We Thy servants* are the ministers at the altar. The Sacrifice is offered, says the prayer, in memory of the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Jesus Christ. The Eucharist is, in fact, the résumé of the mysteries of Our Lord's life. Jesus offers Himself therein as He offered Himself once on earth, and as He still offers Himself mystically and gloriously in Heaven.

The priest continues :

Supra quæ propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris, et accepta habere, sicuti accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel, et sacrificium Patriarchæ nostri Abrahæ, et quod tibi obtulit summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam.

Upon which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as Thou wast graciously pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy high priest, Melchisedech, offered to Thee, a holy sacrifice and unspotted victim.

The priest here prays that God the Father may be pleased to accept our oblation. Three very celebrated sacrifices of the Old Testament are mentioned in this prayer: those ot Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech, the King of Salem. Each of them was a figure or type of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Abel, offering the best of his flock and the first of its fruits, represents Jesus Christ, "*the first-born among His brethren*" (Rom. viii. 29), killed by Cain, that is, by sinners. Abraham, sacrificing his only son Isaac, further recalls the Sacrifice of Calvary, when Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, was put to death for guilty humanity. The sacrifice of Melchisedech is the most mysterious—first on account of the matter of the offering—"*he offered bread and wine*" (Gen. xiv. 18)—and secondly, owing to the person of the priest, whom Holy Scripture describes as "*King of Peace, without father or mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God, a Priest for ever*" (Heb. vii. 3). The words *Sanctum Sacrificium* (Holy Sacrifice), *Immaculatam Hostiam* (unspotted Victim), were added by St. Leo I.; they suitably refer to Christ present under the sacred species. They depend grammatically upon the words *accepta habere;* the phrase must then be understood in the following sense: "*Vouchsafe . . . to accept them . . . this Holy Sacrifice and unspotted Victim.*" The remainder, from *sicuti* down to *Melchisedech*, is a kind of parenthesis; the Liturgy has thus a sense which is *a fortiori* much more beautiful and profound: "Since, Lord, Thou hast not disdained the figures of ancient times, *how much more readily* wilt Thou accept the Sacrifice of the Law of Grace" (*cf.* Dom Guéranger, *Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 163).

The priest continues:

Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus: iube hæc perferri per — We most humbly beseech Thee, Almighty God, to com-

manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinæ majestatis tuæ : ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione sacrosanctum Filii tui Cor ✠ pus, et San ✠ guinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione cœlesti et gratia repleamur. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

mand these things to be carried by the hands of Thy holy Angel to Thine altar on high, in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty, that as many as shall partake of the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son at this altar, may be filled with every heavenly grace and blessing. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Some learned writers, among others Hoppe, contend that this prayer and the one preceding are analogous to the *Epiclesis* or *Invocation* of the Oriental Liturgies, a prayer which follows the words of consecration, and invokes the Holy Spirit to work the mystery of Transubstantiation, and to apply the fruits of it to the faithful. We designedly refrain from entering on this delicate controversy, which is at once theological and historical, and which is outside the scope of our commentary (*cf. Die Epiklese der Griech und Oriental, Liturgieen*, Schaffhausen, 1864, and a study in the *Revue Augustinienne*, March and May, 1909).

As soon as the priest begins this prayer he bows down profoundly ; here more than elsewhere he retains the humble attitude of a suppliant. He leans his joined hands against the altar, making himself, as it were, but one with the Divine Victim. Anciently, it was the custom in many churches not to lean against the altar, but to cross the arms upon the breast, as the Carthusians do even to this day, and as was the practice for some time at Rome. At the word *quotquot*, when the priest mentions the altar of earth he kisses it to show thereby that he, and those who are soon to communicate, ask by virtue of this union with Christ, and of this participation in His Sacrifice, "*to be filled with every heavenly grace and blessing*" (*cf.* Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, t. xiii., p. 513).

The prayer *Supplices* is so deep in meaning that even the Holy Fathers of the Church have not attempted to explain

it. "The human mind," says Innocent III., "can hardly penetrate its sense."

The present prayer connects two different altars—that on earth, on which lie the gifts which have been offered and consecrated, and the mystical altar of Heaven, or, as St. John calls it, "*the golden altar before the throne of God*" (Apoc. viii. 3), whereon are offered the merits of the Redeemer and the prayers of the faithful. Mention is also made of the *holy Angel* who carries the sacred gifts from our altar below and presents them on high. Who is this Angel? He is generally taken to be Jesus Christ Himself, the Angel *par excellence*, the Messenger of God (for *angel* signifies a *messenger*), He Who is called the "*Angel of Great Counsel*" in the Introit of the third Mass for Christmas day. Some authors see in this Angel the *Angel of prayer* spoken of in the Apocalypse (viii. 3), or, again, the Angel who offers to the Lord the actions of the holy, as mentioned in the Book of Tobias (xii. 12).

"In order to understand the essence of this prayer," says Bossuet in his *Explanation of the Prayers of the Mass*, "and to clear up all the difficulties connected with it, we must ever bear in mind that *these things* (*hæc*) of which it speaks are truly the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, that with Our Lord's Body and Blood are included ourselves, along with our desires and prayers, and that all taken together compose one and the same oblation which we desire to render in every respect pleasing to God, not only as far as Jesus Christ is concerned, Who is offered, but also as regards those who offer Him and with Him themselves. For this end what can we do better than ask again the companionship of the Holy Angel, who presents the prayer of the faithful to God (Tob. xii. 12), and with him the fellowship of all his companions in bliss, in order that our gift may rise more promptly and more agreeably before

the heavenly altar, when it is offered in that blessed society ?"

What, then, does the prayer *Supplices* ask from God ? It begs that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and with Him our minds and hearts, may be presented to God, and carried unto the mystical altar of Heaven, and that this may be done by Jesus Christ Himself, in other words, that "*He may appear now in the presence of God for us*" (Heb. ix. 24), accompanied by His mystical Body, the Church, and obtain mercy for us. Those who will partake of the Sacrament of the earthly altar—that is, those who are going to communicate—will share also in the blessings of the heavenly altar, whence flows the source of Divine grace. Let us note, by the way, how salutary it is to communicate during Holy Mass.

O admirable prayer, be often on our lips at that holy hour when we can contemplate with our eyes Him through Whom alone thou must pass upon thy way to Heaven !

Then the priest begins the *Memento* or *Commemoration of the Dead :*

Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N., qui nos præcesserunt cum signo fidei et dormiunt in somno pacis.

Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, N. and N., who are gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace.

Whilst saying this prayer, he raises and joins his hands before his breast, casts down his eyes, fixing them on the Sacred Host, and prays for the departed.

The practice of praying for the dead at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is found in the oldest Liturgies. Even in the Old Law the Jews were pious towards their dead. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in the fourth century, says : " We pray for all of our Communion who have departed from this world, believing that their souls receive a very great relief from the

prayers offered for them in the holy and redoubtable Sacrifice of the Altar." These words sufficiently show, as also does the *Memento*, which are the dead for whom the priest prays at the altar. They are not the Saints in Heaven, for, far from needing our prayers, they benefit us by theirs. They are not the damned, who have lost, alas, all hope of redemption. The Church therefore prays here only for the souls in Purgatory—namely, for those who have died in the *Faith*, who have practised its good works, and who *sleep the sleep of peace*—that is, in communion with the Church. She beseeches God to be mindful of these souls, in other words, to succour them—in the first place, especially those for whom the priest has the explicit intention of praying, and then all the faithful departed in general. There is not celebrated, then, a single Mass in the whole world in which prayer is not made for every Christian who has departed this life in a state of grace, and who is still expiating his sins in Purgatory. The Holy Church is a mother who helps by her suffrages all who belong to her.

Ipsis, Domine, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

To these, O Lord, and all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The place here spoken of is that promised to the just (Wisd. iv. 7), where "*neither mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more*" (Apoc. xxi. 4).

We also ask, O Lord, admittance to this place *for ourselves, sinners though we are* (*nobis peccatoribus*), with which words we commence the fifth prayer after the Consecration.

Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam, et societatem donare digneris, cum tuis sanctis Apos-

And to us sinners Thy servants, hoping in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and Martyrs;

tolis et Martyribus : cum Joanne, Stephano, Matthia, Barnaba, Ignatio, Alexandro, Marcellino, Petro, Felicitate, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, Agnete, Cæcilia, Anastasia, et omnibus Sanctis tuis : intra quorum nos consortium, non æstimator meriti, sed veniæ, quæsumus, largitor admitte.

with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, Anastasia, and with all Thy Saints; into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not in consideration of our merit, but of Thine own gratuitous pardon.

Throughout the whole *Canon* the words *nobis quoque peccatoribus* are the only ones which, being said in a moderately loud voice, break the uniformity of the silence. The priest in this impressive way claims the attention of the faithful. Striking his breast at the same time, he with his assistants forcibly recognizes and declares himself a sinner. The vision of celestial rest (*locum . . . pacis*) has deeply moved him. He has just previously been preoccupied with the Church Suffering, now he returns to the Church Militant, to which he belongs. But this earthly life is full of miseries, temptations, and falls, hence his humble language: "*Not in consideration of our merit, but of Thine own gratuitous pardon, deign to admit us into the society of Thine elect.*"

The list of Saints here enumerated is a counterpart to that given before the Consecration. No Saint is mentioned a second time. In the first list St. John the Evangelist was named; here it is John the Baptist, the precursor. Following him is a glorious band—a deacon, an Apostle, a disciple, a bishop, a priest, an exorcist, and some female martyrs. All form a circle round the sacred table.

Here, formerly, a prayer was offered for the fruits of the earth—wheat, wine, and oil, etc. It ended with the words :

Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem hæc omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, sancti-✠-ficas, vivi-✠-ficas, bene-✠-dicis, et præstas nobis.

Through Christ our Lord. By Whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us all these good things.

The prayer itself has disappeared, but traces of it may still be found in the custom which once existed of blessing food on certain days at this particular point in the Mass. At Easter and Pentecost a beverage made of water, milk, and honey used to be blessed; on Ascension day, new beans; on the Feast of St. Sixtus, new grapes; and on Maundy Thursday the oil of the sick, which is still blessed on this day. The conclusion, "*Per Christum . . .*," with what follows, formerly applied to the foods to be blessed; it now refers to the sacramental species of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus that God the Father *creates* the gifts offered up, which are our goods; it is through Him that He *sanctifies* them, setting them apart from common use; it is through Him He *quickens* them by changing them into the Precious Body and Blood; it is through Him that He *blesses and gives to us all these good things.* The signs of the Cross more expressly indicate the gifts spoken of. They can also signify that all these mysterious operations of *sanctifying*, *quickening*, and *blessing* are done through the merits of the Cross of Christ. No sign of the Cross is made at the word *creas*, because the act of Creation precedes that of Redemption.

Here praise of Christ becomes sublime.

Per ip ✠ sum, et cum ip ✠ so, et in ip ✠ so, est tibi Deo Patri ✠ omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus✠ Sancti, omnis honor et gloria.

Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory.

It is *through Jesus*, the true "*Mediator of God and men*" (1 Tim. ii. 5), *with Jesus*, equal to the Father, *in Jesus*, consubstantial with His Father, that the same *God the Father Almighty is honoured and glorified.* The Holy Ghost, inseparable from both, co-operates in this Divine work.

At each of the expressions, *through Him*, *with Him*, and *in Him*, the priest makes with the consecrated Host the

sign of the Cross over the Chalice, from side to side. This he does not only to designate more clearly the Christ, and to express by his action the identity of the Holy Victim of the altar with that sacrificed on Calvary, but, moreover, to point out "in a vivid manner the ever-increasing intimacy established between the two Species" (Desloge). When he names the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit* he naturally makes the sign of the Cross outside the Chalice, because the above symbolical reason no longer exists.

At the words "*omnis honor et gloria*" ("all honour and glory") the priest raises slightly the Chalice and the Host together. This was once, as we have seen, the true Elevation of the Mass. The practice of ringing the bell at this moment recalls the ancient custom.[1] This Elevation commenced at the words *per ipsum*, etc., which, before the end of the ninth century, were not accompanied with the sign of the Cross.

Immediately the priest continues in a loud voice:

Per omnia sæcula sæculorum. For ever and ever. Amen.
Amen.

This formula is here simply the conclusion of the preceding prayer. But that the people may hear this conclusion, which is that of the *whole Canon*, and respond to it *Amen*, the priest, as at the Preface, says it aloud, or in the case of a Solemn or High Mass, sings it.

The practice of thus separating this conclusion from what precedes it is not very ancient; St. Pius V., in the sixteenth century, definitely sanctioned it. Until then the celebrant said these words whilst elevating the Host and Chalice, as the Carthusians do to this day.

All that has been done and said by the priest in the *Canon* is ratified by the people when they reply *Amen*.

[1] In Belgium and some other countries the bell is rung at this Elevation.—Note to English Edition.

Thus is ended this important part of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the longest, the most holy, and the most essential. Another part—the Communion—begins with the Lord's Prayer. The priest comes forth, as it were, from the cloud in which he has seen God face to face and returns to the faithful, whom he must nourish and strengthen.

§ 3. From the Pater Noster to the Last Gospel.

This last part of the Mass in its entirety relates to the Communion; it contains certain prayers in preparation for the reception of the Divine Victim, the actual reception, and the thanksgiving which follows it. Let us piously study them.

The Pater Noster.

The people having replied *Amen* to the prayers of the Canon, the priest continues, saying:

Oremus.	Let us pray.
Præceptis salutaribus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere.	Instructed by Thy saving precepts, and following Thy Divine instructions, we presume to say:

This little introduction to the *Pater Noster* is very ancient. St. Cyprian and St. Jerome already allude to it. The prayer which is about to be said is so holy that the priest hardly dares to recite it; it is Christ's prayer, and it is only at His command that he presumes to say it.

Pater noster, qui es in cœlis, sanctificetur nomen tuum: adveniat regnum tuum: fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cœlo, et in terra; panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie: et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris; et ne nos inducas in tentationem.	Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed by Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation.

The people reply:

Sed libera nos a malo. But deliver us from evil.

There is no one who is ignorant of the origin of the *Pater Noster;* Jesus Christ Himself is the author of it. No prayer is to be compared with it for depth, power, and majesty.

We must here notice a difference in the Greek and Latin Liturgies. In the Greek Church all the people recite or chant the *Pater Noster* with the celebrant. With us the priest alone recites it, the people being content with saying the last petition · "*Sed libera nos a malo*—But deliver us from evil." St. Gregory the Great even speaks of this custom. It is certain, on the other hand, that in the ancient Gallican Liturgy, before Charlemagne's time, the people chanted the *Pater Noster*. St. Gregory of Tours relates that it was while the people were singing the *Pater Noster*, that a dumb woman who had come on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Martin felt her tongue loosed, and began to sing with the faithful. In the Mozarabic Liturgy, which is that of the Spanish Churches, the people replied *Amen* to each petition of the Lord's Prayer.

It is not our intention to give here an explanation of the *Pater Noster*. The Saints and Doctors of the Church have profoundly and fully explained it. We shall only deal now with the *Pater Noster* in so far as it has reference to the Liturgy of the Mass and prepares us for the Communion.

The *daily bread* asked of our Heavenly Father is indeed no other than that which is upon the altar, Jesus Christ, the Bread descended from Heaven, which preserves us from eternal death (John vi. 50). The *Our Father* is, then, an immediate preparation for Holy Communion ; this is evident if we bear in mind the moment of the Mass when it was formerly recited. Before the time of Gregory the Great (the sixth century), the *Canon* was immediately followed by the Kiss of Peace, the Breaking of the Host, the *Pater*

Noster, and the Communion. The aforesaid Pope changed the then existing order, placing the *Our Father* between the Canon and the Kiss of Peace. And why this modification ? For two reasons : first, the *Pater Noster*, on account of its Divine origin, merited a very conspicuous place ; it was fitting that it should follow the *Canon*, of all prayers of the Mass the most worthy and the most solemn. Moreover, the Lord's Prayer was such a suitable preparation for the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace. Indeed, the petition " *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us* " naturally inspired the faithful with that kindly charity of which the Kiss of Peace was going to be the evident sign. That is the reason why the *Pater Noster* is recited at Mass and in its present place. Could Holy Church have chosen a more sacred prayer for disposing us for that union of hearts, which will soon be sealed by our communion with Him " *Who is our peace* " (Ephes. ii. 14).

What a grand and solemn prayer is the *Pater Noster* which is recited at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass !

The Libera Nos.

After the people have replied " *Sed libera nos a malo*," the celebrant adds in a low voice *Amen*, a further sign of spiritual union between the priest and his brethren ; his meaning is : may all our petitions be heard ! This *Amen* has not always been said after the *Pater Noster* ; it used to be added after the prayer " *Libera nos*," which follows, and which is, after all, but a paraphrase of " *Sed libera nos a malo*."

Towards the end of the *Pater Noster* the subdeacon, who has remained at the foot of the altar since the *Sanctus*, ascends the steps, and gives the deacon the paten, which the latter wipes with the purificator. The priest receives it from his minister, and holds it upright on the altar cloth. Meanwhile he recites the following prayer ;

Libera nos, quæsumus Domine, ab omnibus malis, præteritis, præsentibus et futuris: et intercedente beata, et gloriosa semper Virgine Dei Genitrice Maria, cum beatis Apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo, atque Andrea, et omnibus Sanctis, da propitius pacem in diebus nostris ut ope misericordiæ tuæ adjuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi, et ab omni perturbatione securi.

Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and future, and by the intercession of the blessed and ever glorious, Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and of Thy blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and of Andrew and of all the Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days, that, through the assistance of Thy mercy, we may be always free from sin and secure from all disturbance.

Liturgical writers have called this prayer *Embolismus* (development). It is in reality only the completion or development of the last petition of the *Pater Noster*. The evil of which it speaks includes all evils past, present, and future, evils of both soul and body, from which we beg to be preserved or delivered. The priest consequently asks for *peace*: "*Da propitius pacem in diebus nostris*—Mercifully grant peace in our days." These last words seem to show that the *Libera nos* was added during some persecution or great calamity. In any case it is of very ancient origin, for it is found in the oldest Sacramentaries.

At one time the priest was allowed to add after the name of St. Andrew the names of any Saints he wished (Ordo Romanus IV.; Micrologus, c. 13; Honorius I., 109).

The moment the priest pronounces the word *peace*, he signs himself with the paten, which he afterwards kisses; here again he indicates by sign the blessing, which he begs by word. The paten is a symbol of peace, for it is about to receive the Sacred Host, Jesus Christ, *the Prince of Peace* (Isa. ix. 6).

The Breaking of the Host.

At the end of the *Libera nos* the priest breaks the Sacred Host into three portions. We shall say only a few words concerning this rite of the Breaking of the Bread.

The Jews used not to cut but break their bread. In conformity with this practice, Our Lord at the Last Supper, when He had consecrated the bread, broke it and distributed it to His Apostles. This rite was always religiously kept in the primitive Church; it even gave its name to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which was called "*the Breaking of Bread.*" When the Liturgy developed, and several prayers and ceremonies were introduced between the Consecration and the Communion, the *Breaking of the Host* was naturally detached from the Consecration and placed before the Communion, for which it prepared. It was not long before a mystical meaning was sought in this ceremony: without forgetting that the Real Presence of the Sacred Humanity is integrally under each sensible particle of the bread, there was seen in the broken Host the Body of Jesus (metaphorically) broken by His sufferings for our sins. This symbolism reacted even on the ceremony: the Eastern Liturgy divided the Host into four parts, the Mozarabic into nine. Both gave to these particles, which the celebrant had to arrange in the form of a cross, names borrowed from the principal mysteries of the Redemption. The Roman Church, always more temperate in her Liturgy and more discreet in her mysticism, preserved the simplicity of the early rite and only divided the Host for distribution. It was customary to reserve one portion of the Sacred Host until the Sacrifice of the following day; this was presented to the Bishop for him to adore, when he went to the altar at the Introit, and had to be placed by him in the Chalice before the breaking of the new Host. In this way the continuity of the Sacrifice of the Cross in all ages was shown forth. Other particles were reserved for the sick and prisoners, or were sent to other Bishops, who sometimes lived at a great distance. Later, out of respect for the Sacred Host these long journeys were forbidden, and then these particles

were only sent to priests who celebrated in filial churches. This, again, was to show the unity of the Sacrifice : in all churches the same Eucharist is offered. The largest portion of the Sacred Species was naturally destined for the Communion of the celebrant, his ministers, and the faithful ; all ate and drank of the same Species, some drops even being poured from the chalice destined for the Bishop and priest into that intended for the people, to represent in a material manner, as it were, that all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. These customs have disappeared.

In the present Liturgy the priest divides the Host into three parts, one of which he lets fall into the chalice. This might well recall the presanctified particle which was formerly placed in the sacred vessel. The two remaining portions are to remind us that celebrant and faithful partook in a sensible manner of the same Bread of Life. Let us remember, however, that if this sensible form has disappeared, the reality has remained unchanged. In one of her most magnificent prayers the Church says : "*Pour into us, O Lord, the spirit of Thy charity, that Thy grace may unite those whom Thou hast satiated with the same celestial bread.*" How can I, then, have any ill-feeling towards any one of my brethren, to whom Jesus gives as well as to me His Body to eat and His Blood to drink ?

Whilst breaking the Host, the priest says in a low voice the conclusion of the prayer *Libera nos :*

Per eumdem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus.

Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth God.

Then in a loud voice :

Per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

World without end. Amen.

And with one of the three particles, which he holds between his thumb and index finger, he makes thrice the sign of the Cross over the chalice, saying :

Pax ✠ Domini sit ✠ semper vobis ✠ cum. — The peace of the Lord be always with you.

The people reply :

Et cum spiritu tuo. — And with thy spirit.

Anciently the Bishop gave the blessing before the *Pax Domini*, as is shown in the sixth Roman Ordo. In Gaul and Spain, however, he used to bless the people after the *Pax Domini* (Mabillon, *De Liturgia Gallicana*, i. 4, 13, 14). The explanation is : those who were not going to Holy Communion were thus able to leave, once they had received the blessing. During the first ten centuries this last salutation was the signal for the *Kiss of Peace*, which the faithful gave to each other. The deacon used to convey it to the congregation. Although the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace is nowadays postponed for a few moments, yet the meaning of the salutation has not changed ; let us, then, prepare our hearts to give evidence of our fraternal charity.

Dropping the particle into the chalice, the priest says in a low voice :

Hæc commixtio, et consecratio Corporis et Sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, fiat accipientibus nobis in vitam æternam. Amen. — May this mixture and consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us receiving it effectual to eternal life. Amen.

What does this last mingling signify ? Many liturgists, among them the celebrated Pope Benedict XIV., in his "*Sacrifice of the Mass*," explain it thus : the Mass is the summary of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, particularly those of His Death and Resurrection. At the Consecration, the separation of the Precious Body and Blood, although

merely apparent and mystical, represents more clearly to our senses the Passion and Death of the Saviour. The mingling of the Holy Species in the chalice represents the reunion of His Soul and Body, and His Resurrection. Of course, this is only a symbol, for, in reality, in Holy Mass the Body of Jesus is always living and united to His Blood, as His Blood is to His Body.

The signs of the Cross accompanying the *Pax Domini* remind us that the peace, announced and promised by our Saviour, has been given to us by the merits of His Cross.

Finally, the priest prays and implores for those who are shortly to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, that the mysterious mingling of this Sacred Body and Blood may be to them a pledge of their union with Jesus for all eternity. This last wish naturally brings us to the prayers which form the immediate preparation for Holy Communion.

The Agnus Dei.

The priest continues :

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.	Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.	Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.	Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, give us peace.

This touching formula is well known to the faithful, for the Church has transferred it from the Holy Sacrifice into her Litanies. It is borrowed, at least partly, from St. John the Baptist, who, seeing our Saviour passing, pointed Him out to His disciples, saying : " *Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him, Who taketh away the sin of the world* " (St. John i. 29).

It was a Pope of the seventh century, Sergius I. (687-701), who caused the *Agnus Dei* to be sung during the

Breaking of the Host. Since the eleventh century it is chanted thrice, to fill up the period of silence between the Breaking of the Host and the Communion. This prayer used only to be sung by the choir, as it is the public preparation of the faithful for Communion. Towards the eleventh century priests had begun to say it at the altar, as is proved from some liturgical books of that period, thus uniting themselves to the faithful in a common preparation for the holy banquet.

Until the eleventh century the three *Agnus Deis* were all terminated in the same way. This is still the custom at the Church of St. John Lateran in Rome. The "*Dona nobis pacem*—Give us peace" has been substituted for "*Miserere nobis*—Have mercy on us," because of the Kiss of Peace which is about to be mutually given, and which the prayer thus modified announces. Other authors—for example, Innocent III. (*The Mystery of the Mass*)—think that the change was made owing to certain troubles that afflicted the Church at that time.

In Mass for the Dead the last words of each of the three invocations are changed for "*Dona eis requiem*—Grant them rest." To the third "*Dona eis requiem*" is added "*Sempiternam*—Everlasting." This practice was universal even in the twelfth century. The Ambrosian Liturgy has no other form of the *Agnus Dei* than the last mentioned, and recites it only at Masses for the Dead.

Each time the priest recites the *Agnus Dei*, he strikes his breast at the words "*Miserere nobis*" and "*Dona nobis pacem*," as a sign of sorrow and of fervour. This he does not do at Requiem Masses, the reason of which is obvious.

The *Agnus Dei* is, as we have said, a preparatory prayer for Holy Communion. So great is the mystery of love about to be wrought, and such the purity it demands, that priest and people feel the need of imploring mercy from

the Immaculate Lamb, Who effaces all our sinful stains. They pray for *peace*—"*that peace of God which surpasses all understanding*" (Phil. iv. 7), and which will prepare them to receive with recollection and devotion Him Who is about to come to them.

The Kiss of Peace and the Prayers before the Communion.

The first of the three solemn prayers preparatory to the Communion is as follows:

Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis: pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis; ne respicias peccata mea, sed fidem Ecclesiæ tuæ; eamque secundum voluntatem tuam pacificare et coadunare digneris; qui vivis et regnas Deus per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Who saidst to Thy Apostles: peace I leave to you, My peace I give unto you; regard not my sins, but the faith of Thy Church; and grant her that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy will, Who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

This prayer implores only *peace*, which should unite the faithful more closely, and so prepare them for Communion.

The Kiss of Peace exchanged at Mass is simply the symbol of that charity which should unite all who approach the Holy Table. A few words, then, about the Kiss of Peace.

The celebrant, bending down a little, recites the above prayer; he then kisses the altar and gives the embrace, or pax, to the deacon. The latter conveys the pax to the subdeacon, who, in a collegiate or conventional Mass, gives it to those in the choir.

We have already explained above the meaning attached to the kissing of the altar. The altar represents Jesus Christ; it is the peace of the God-Man that the priest receives on kissing the altar. This is so true that in the twelfth century the custom of even kissing the Host was propagated in many churches in France. Elsewhere they

kissed the chalice, the corporal, or the pall, all of which come into immediate contact with the Precious Body of Jesus Christ. For this same reason, the pax is of all liturgical salutes the most solemn and impressive.

The Kiss of Peace, the time for which varied very much, was given in the form of an actual kiss until the middle of the thirteenth century. Towards that period there appeared the "pax instrument" (*osculatorium*), "the tablet of peace" (*tabula pacis*), or "the kissing-stone" (*marmor deosculandum*). In some churches in Germany, at nuptial Masses, the bride and bridegroom kiss the picture of the Crucifixion which is in the Missal just before the Canon. Moreover, in certain parts of Flanders at the ceremony of Churching, the mother is made to kiss the pax at this moment in the Mass.

For many centuries, as we have said, the pax was only given in the form of a real kiss. It has always been regarded as the most evident sign of charity and brotherhood—for are not Christians brethren? Everyone thus saluted his neighbour—the men each other on one side of the church and the women on the other. The greatest importance was attached to this ceremony, the signification of which was so profound. St. Augustine, speaking of it, says: "That which is expressed by the lips ought to have a corresponding effect in the conscience—that is, just as your lips approach those of your brother, so your heart should itself unite with his heart." As faith grew gradually cold, the symbol of the Kiss of Peace was no longer understood. Use was then made for the laity of an instrument, which, having been first kissed by the priest, was then passed round the congregation. Soon the practice fell into disuse. Nowadays the clergy alone observe it.

As the priest gives the Kiss of Peace, he says: "*Pax*

tecum—Peace be with you." He who receives it replies: "*Et cum spiritu tuo*—And with thy spirit." In certain churches the formula slightly varied. For example, at Paris was said: "*May peace be given to you, my brother, and to the Holy Church of God.*" Sometimes, also, there was added: "*That you may be in a becoming state to draw near to the Holy Mysteries.*" These last words give the fundamental meaning of the ceremony: we must love one another if we would draw near to the Sacrament of Love. This is, besides, the express command of Jesus Christ Himself: "*If thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*" (St. Matt. v. 23, 24). These words of Our Lord caused several Churches to place the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace before the Offertory. The Roman Church, however, retained it in the place which it actually occupies.

Finally, we have to observe that this ceremony does not take place at Mass for the Dead. For the departed the priest has asked peace and rest, not only at the *Canon*, but also in many of the parts of the Liturgy proper to *Requiem* Masses, in the Introit, the Gradual, and even the Epistle. The compassion we feel for their souls cannot be expressed by any sensible manifestation, but only by an aspiration of the heart. At *Requiem* Masses the preceding prayer, which clearly applies to the Church Militant, is omitted, as is also the Kiss of Peace. Let us add that the Church does not allow the Kiss of Peace to be given on the three last days of Holy Week, in order to show her horror at the sacrilegious kiss of Judas.

Immediately following the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace are two prayers which are directly preparatory to the Communion and which personally concern the priest,

consequently he recites them under his breath, with eyes fixed upon the Sacred Host, to which the prayers are addressed. Meanwhile he remains bowed down as a sign of humble reverence. They are as follows :

Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris, cooperante Spiritu sancto, per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti : libera me per hoc sacrosanctum Corpus et Sanguinem tuum ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis, et universis malis ; et fac me tuis semper inhærere mandatis, et a te nunquam separari permittas. Qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Who, according to the will of the Father, hast by Thy death, through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, given life to the world ; deliver me by this Thy most sacred Body and Blood from all my iniquities, and from all evils ; and make me always adhere to Thy commands. Never suffer me to be separated from Thee. Who, with the same God the Father and Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

Perceptio Corporis tui, Domine Jesu Christe, quod ego indignus sumere præsumo, non mihi proveniat in judicium et condemnationem ; sed pro tua pietate prosit mihi ad tutamentum mentis et corporis, et ad medelam percipiendam : qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Let not the participation of Thy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation ; but through Thy piety, may it be a safeguard and remedy both to soul and body ; Who with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

These prayers are scarcely as old as those which have preceded. Originally the Communion took place just after the Kiss of Peace. But whilst the *Agnus Dei* was being sung and the Kiss of Peace given, priests were wont, before communicating, to recite, according to their devotion, some private prayers to prepare themselves more directly for this great act. The Church, about the eleventh century, chose from these prayers two which were well known, especially at Rome, and inserted them in the *Ordinary of the Mass*. They are those given above.

It is desirable that the faithful should recite them with the priest, especially if they intend to communicate, since they contain sentiments which dispose for the holy reception of the Heavenly Bread. The first begs from Our Lord the great gift of final perseverance and an interior union with Him—a union which realizes the avoidance of sin and unswerving faithfulness to the law of God. The second inspires him who is about to receive his God with fear and humility, and solicits the salutary fruits which come to us from the Divine Presence within us.

The Communion.

Everyone knows that the *Communion* is an integral part of the Holy Sacrifice, so much so that, should a priest for any reason be unable to continue the Mass after the Consecration, another must finish it, communicating in his place.

First, a few words concerning the *priest's Communion.* As soon as he has recited the two prayers of which we have just spoken, he takes in his left hand the consecrated Host, saying:

Panem cœlestem accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo.[1]

I will take the bread of Heaven, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

These words express great respect mingled with fear. The priest then says thrice in succession, in a moderate tone, each time striking his breast:

Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum: sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.

[1] These prayers varied according to the different Churches and their respective Liturgies (see Dom Martène, O.S.B., in his celebrated work, *De Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, t. I., 415 ss., Rouen, 1700).

These words are taken from the Gospel of St. Luke vii. 6, where the centurion beseeches the cure of his servant. How is it possible to express the feelings that here fill the priest's soul? His knowledge of his own unworthiness would cause him to draw back from the reception of His Master, did not the merciful condescension of His God, Who comes to him, give him courage. Besides, he has been explicitly commanded by Christ to receive Him. He then takes the Sacred Body of the Lord into his right hand, and, making therewith the sign of the Cross over himself, says:

Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animan meam in vitam æternam. Amen.

May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.

This sign of the Cross manifests Christ; it is a fresh act of faith in Jesus crucified, Who, on the altar as on Calvary, gives Himself up for the salvation of men. The above formula varied in olden days. One Missal has the following form: "I salute Thee, O Flesh of Jesus Christ, for ever holy, Thee, Who are before all and above all my supreme delight."

The priest remains a short time in meditation, but he must not recite any vocal prayers. He then uncovers chalice and genuflects, saying:

Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?

What return shall I make the Lord for all He has given to me?

Already gratitude overflows from this priestly heart satiated with his Lord. He next gathers on to the paten the sacred particles—the *precious pearls*, as the Greek Liturgy calls them—which may have fallen from the Host upon the corporal. He then takes in his hand the chalice, and, borrowing other verses from Psalm cxv., he says:

Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo. Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.

I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. Praising, I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies.

He again makes the sign of the Cross over himself, saying:

Sanguis Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam. Amen.

May the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.

Let us notice in passing those expressions: "*May the Body. May the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting.*" *Life everlasting* is indeed the great fruit of the Eucharist, which prepares for it, leads to it, and is the pledge of it. Christ Himself has said: "*He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*" (St. John vi. 55). The seed is sown in the soul, and will spring up therein.

We must still say a few words about the *Communion of the faithful.* It were greatly to be desired, and it certainly is in agreement with the rubrics and the spirit of the Liturgy, that the people should communicate after the Communion of the priest. Such was always the practice in olden times. The great number of communicants has, however, led to its being permissible to delay giving Holy Communion until the end of Mass, so that those who only assist at the Holy Sacrifice may not be obliged to remain too long.

Every Christian is aware that for many centuries Communion *under both species*—now the privilege of the priest—was given to all the faithful. This manner of receiving the Sacrament, though never of precept, was the general custom until the fifteenth century. Since then the Church has very wisely abolished this custom, out of respect for the Precious Blood, which used to be exposed to the danger of being spilled, and also out of regard for the manners of a more delicate society. Let us, however, give some details concerning the practice of our ancestors.

During the first centuries the priest or the deacon conveyed the chalice containing the consecrated wine to the

lips of the faithful, who took a small quantity of it. In the Middle Ages use was made of a golden or silver tube through which the faithful used to draw and suck in the Precious Blood. The author of the *Imitation* alludes to this practice (Book iv., c. 4). During the same period the rite of communicating under both species underwent many changes. In some countries the priest poured some drops of consecrated wine into a larger quantity of unconsecrated wine, and it was of the latter that the people partook at Holy Communion. In other countries the priest gave them the Sacred Host after it had been lightly dipped into the consecrated wine. However, the custom of distributing pure consecrated wine prevailed (*Bulletin of the Institute of Archæology at Liège*, vol. xvi., pp. 353, 354).

Formerly the men received the Host in the right hand; the women in the same hand covered with a linen cloth, which was called the *dominical*, because it was destined to receive the Body of the Lord.

The *Confiteor*, or *Confession*, which precedes the distribution of Holy Communion, is of comparatively recent introduction. The Church, in the thirteenth century, borrowed it from the monks, who were wont to recite it before Communion to obtain a more perfect purity of conscience.

After having replied to the *Confiteor* by the *Misereatur* and the *Indulgentiam*, the priest takes the ciborium and, holding up a consecrated Host, He shows it to the people, saying: "*Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world.*" He repeats on behalf of the faithful, as he has just done for himself, the words of the centurion: "*Domine non sum dignus . . .*—Lord, I am not worthy . . ." He then distributes the Sacred Species, saying: "*May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life eternal.*"

The rubric dealing with the Communion of the faithful ends with the following words: "The minister presents to those who have communicated a vase containing wine and water and a napkin to wipe the mouth." This ceremony is not performed nowadays, save on rare occasions—as, for instance, at ordinations, at the religious profession of monks, and, among the Carthusians, at Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday. The practice, however, was general in the Latin Church before the fifteenth century, at which epoch Communion under both species ceased to be given. It was observed at Menin until the end of the sixteenth century, notably on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, sometimes even on other great feasts of the year (Rembry-Barth, *History of Menin*, vol. iv., p. 637). The origin of it was the difficulty experienced by the faithful in swallowing properly the Sacred Host, which, owing to its size, was liable to adhere to the teeth or palate. There being no longer any reason for this practice, it has been discontinued.

The Ablutions.

We have now reached the *Ablutions*—that is, the purification of the chalice and of the fingers which have touched the Precious Body and Blood. Until the thirteenth century the priest performed this rite in the following way: he purified the chalice with water and wine, which were afterwards poured into a piscina, called *lavatorium*—"a lavatory." He used afterwards to purify his fingers in a special vessel, which was emptied likewise into the piscina; perhaps he washed his hands at the piscina itself.

A vestige of this custom remains in the Pontifical Mass, when the Bishop, after the two ablutions, which are actually prescribed, washes his fingers in a basin brought to him at the Epistle corner. Innocent III., at the beginning of the same century—the thirteenth—ordered

priests to purify the chalice first of all with pure wine, which they were then to drink. This was already the practice in religious Orders, as the Customs of the Abbey of Cluny and the *Uses* of Citeaux prove. This corresponds to the first ablution now prescribed. The second, intended especially for the purification of the fingers, is actually done with wine and water over the chalice itself which has been used for the Holy Sacrifice. The priest likewise drinks this wine and water. Originally there was little uniformity in all these practices. Some priests even believed they might dispense with any ablution of the fingers other than the washing of the hands after Mass which is still in vogue.

During both ablutions, Holy Church places on the lips of the priest two magnificent prayers. Here is the first, appointed for the purification of the chalice :

Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus, et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum.

Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth we may receive with a pure mind, that of a temporal gift it may become for us an eternal remedy.

This prayer is very ancient ; it was already in use in the ninth century ; it is the Post-Communion of the Mass for Thursday in Passion Week. Some Missals seem to show that it was then recited by each of the faithful who approached the Holy Table. At the present day only the priest recites it, and that under his breath, both in his own name and in that of all the communicants. Through it we beg from God the grace of drawing from the Divine Food the necessary strength to surmount the frailties of our nature so prone to evil.

The second prayer, which accompanies the purification of the chalice and of the priest's fingers, is thus worded :

Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi. et Sanguis, quem potavi, adhæreat visceribus meis: et præsta ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt sacramenta, qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculórum. Amen.

May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood, which I have drunk, cleave to my heart; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been fed with pure and holy Sacraments, Who livest world without end. Amen.

This prayer is taken from a Post-Communion in an ancient Gothic Missal anterior to Charlemagne's time. The priest can, properly speaking, recite it only for himself, since Communion under both kinds has become his exclusive privilege.

The prayers and ceremonies that follow form the thanksgiving of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The priest and the faithful, after having offered to God the Father the Body and Blood of His Divine Son Jesus, have been nourished and strengthened thereby. It is but fitting that they should thank the Lord for so many graces.

The Communion Antiphon.

As soon as the priest has purified the chalice, he hands it to the subdeacon, who wipes it and then covers it with the veil and burse. In the meantime the celebrant reads at the Epistle side the antiphon called the *Communion*. This antiphon—generally a verse from a Psalm—was until the eleventh century sung during the distribution of Holy Communion; whence its name. It was followed by the Psalm from which it is taken. The distribution being ended, the cantor intoned the *Gloria Patri*, after which the antiphon was repeated.

Since the eleventh century the Psalm and *Gloria* have disappeared, the antiphon alone being sung, and that after the Communion of the faithful. It has thus assumed the character of a hymn of thanksgiving; hence it is usually of a joyous strain.

The Post-Communion.

The priest goes to the centre of the altar, kisses it, and, turning towards the people, says: "*Dominus vobiscum* —The Lord be with you." He returns to the book, and therein reads the prayer called *Post-Communion*, because it follows the Communion. Liturgists sometimes call it the *Complenda*, or *Oratio ad complendum* (finishing prayer), because it is actually with it that the Mass ends. It is specially intended to thank God for the graces received through the virtue of the Holy Sacrifice, and to beg Him to cause their salutary influence to abide in our souls.

There are always the same number of prayers at the Post-Communion as at the Collect and the Secret of the Mass.

On ferial days in Lent there is recited immediately after the Post-Communion another prayer called *Oratio super populum* (the prayer over the people). This prayer in Solemn Mass is introduced by a general invitation to pray with the priest. The deacon, whose office it always is to invite the faithful to pray in common (Desloge, *Study on the Meaning of Liturgical Things*, p. 350), calls aloud: "*Humiliate capita vestra Deo*—Bow down your heads before God." This prayer has no connection with the Post-Communion.

It is probable that the *Oratio super populum* (the prayer over the people), which was said in olden times throughout the whole year, was originally a more solemn Benediction given by the priest to the congregation. In fact, the Blessing, which nowadays follows the *Ite Missa est*, did not then exist. Later, an idea of penance was added to the recitation of this prayer; accordingly, it has been reserved for Masses in Lent, with the exception of Mass on Sunday, a day on which penance relaxes something of its severity.

The Ite Missa est.

Down to the ninth century, the *Ite Missa est*, which follows the Post-Communion, ended the Mass. The prayers which follow—that is, the *Placeat*, the *Blessing*, and the *Last Gospel*—have been added only by degrees to the Liturgy.

What is the origin of the *Ite Missa est*, and when is it said? These three words are commonly translated, "Go; the Mass is said." They really mean, "Go; it is the dismissal"—that is, "You may now withdraw." The Fathers, as early as the fourth century, mention the dismissal of the congregation.

In Solemn Mass it is the deacon's place to announce this dismissal; he, however, speaks on the part of the priest. At Verdun a touching ceremony was observed in olden times: the deacon, on his knees, received from the priest the *Ite Missa est*, kissed his chasuble and answered, *Deo Gratias;* he then rose up, and, turning towards the people, sang *Ite Missa est.* In order to show that the deacon is only the mouthpiece of the priest, the latter stands facing the people during the singing of this formula (*cf.* Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. x., p. 440).

The interpretation of the *Ite Missa est* has undergone a rather curious evolution. The general rule formerly was to proclaim the *Ite Missa est* on days when there was a large congregation. It was then sung not only on all Sundays of the year, but also on feast days, from Septuagesima until Easter, and even on ferial days in Lent, precisely because on those days the faithful, more fervent then than nowadays, were accustomed to assist in great numbers at the Holy Sacrifice.

Later, and by a very natural transposition, the *Ite Missa est*—this "sign of full churches"—was regarded as an

invitation to rejoice. It was made, as it were, a distant echo of the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, and was therefore heard only on days when that hymn had been sung; for that reason it was, and is still, omitted on Sundays in Advent and from Septuagesima until Easter, on which days there is no *Gloria in Excelsis*. But, as an exception to the rule, it used at one time to be omitted also from the Midnight Mass for Christmas, because, since *Lauds* were to be sung immediately after, it was not fitting just then to dismiss the congregation.

According to our present rubrics, when the *Ite Missa est* is not said it is replaced by either *Benedicamus Domino*—Let us bless the Lord, or *Requiescant in Pace*—May they rest in peace.[1] Thus, by a coincidence so happy that it deserved to be intentional, we find that the words of dismissal are not pronounced whenever there is a liturgical reason why the people should not at once depart. Mass for the Dead is, in fact, followed by the Absolution. As regards the days of Advent and Lent, the Ember days and Vigils, they are days of penance, on which it is fitting that the people should be urged to remain in prayer and recollection. Undoubtedly it could not be said that, inversely, the absence of the *dismissal* is necessarily a sign of mourning or penance; for example, such is not the case on ordinary ferial days, when the Church celebrates the Mass of the season or some votive Mass without the *Gloria in Excelsis*. There is established, however, a liturgical rule to the effect that the *Ite Missa est* is an invitation to spiritual joy, while the opposite sentiment, however slight it may be, excludes the *Ite Missa est*.

The two forms *Benedicamus Domino* and *Requiescant in*

[1] The *Requiescant in Pace* seems to be an abbreviation of the long prayer, "*Fidelium animæ per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace*—May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace."

Pace, being prayers, and not words addressed to the congregation, are sung by the deacon facing the altar.

To the *Ite Missa est* and *Benedicamus Domino* is answered *Deo Gratias*. This is the natural conclusion to the great mystery which has just been accomplished, and nothing can better end this sublime Action than a cry of thanksgiving unto God. To *Requiescant in Pace* is answered *Amen*. This expressive word ratifies the prayer offered by the priest on behalf of the departed.

The Placeat.

Since the tenth century the celebrant, immediately after the *Ite Missa est*, or the formula substituted in its place, recites privately the prayer *Placeat*. This prayer, like many others met with in the course of the Mass, is in the singular number. Until the sixteenth century it was not considered as an integral part of the Liturgy. St. Pius V. inserted it definitively in the Ordinary of the Mass. The *Placeat* well deserves this position of honour. Recalling in a very striking way the prayer of the oblation, *Suscipe Sancte Pater*, it forms an admirable epilogue to the Holy Mass, being a very forcible and pregnant prayer in which the priest speaks in his own name, yet on behalf of all, and in which he sums up all his intentions, and recapitulates the four ends of sacrifice—namely, adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation, and supplication. It is as follows :

Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas, obsequium servitutis meæ, et præsta ut sacrificium, quod oculis tuæ Majestatis indignus obtuli, tibi sit acceptabile, mihique et omnibus pro quibus illud obtuli, sit, te miserante, propitiabile. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Let the performance of my homage be pleasing to Thee, O Holy Trinity; and grant that the sacrifice which I, though unworthy, have offered up in the sight of Thy Majesty, may be acceptable to Thee, and through Thy mercy be a propitiation for me, and all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The priest, for the last time, kisses the altar. He seems to do so solely out of love and respect for Christ, just as he did when he ascended to the altar at the beginning of the Holy Sacrifice (*Collationes Brugenses*). It is thus the minister takes leave of Him Whom he has represented in the priesthood, Whom he has received and Whom, it may be, he has distributed to others in the Sacrament.

The Blessing.

There is no document authorizing us to believe that, before the eleventh century, a simple priest blessed the faithful at the end of Mass ; this was a solemn act reserved to the Bishop. There used to exist, however, another blessing which was not privileged, and which was given by the priest between the *Pater Noster* and the *Communion.* The latter has since disappeared, whilst the former, on the contrary, has become general. In fact, about the date mentioned above, priests used to bless the people at the end of Mass, but only with permission of the Bishop. Gradually this last condition died away, and the present custom was established. As regards the formula employed it was not always the same. Some used the solemn form, now reserved to Bishops and Prelates ; others were satisfied with the following :

Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus ✠ *Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus.*	May Almighty God, ✠ the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you.
R. Amen.	*R.* Amen.

This is the form in use to-day. It seems that originally only the Bishop might bless the people with his hand, the simple priest using for that purpose a cross, the chalice, or the paten. Some priests made three signs of the Cross when pronouncing the names of the Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity ; others contented themselves with only one. Finally, St. Pius V. prescribed the present rite :

the priest kisses the altar before he gives the Benediction, as if desirous to borrow from Christ the blessing to be bestowed upon the people; he next raises his hands to Heaven to draw down, as it were, the grace of God, turns towards the people, and then, while making the sign of the Cross over them, pronounces the formula quoted above.

We should highly value this blessing, given us on behalf of Our Lord; it is intended to confirm in us the graces of the Holy Sacrifice.

The Last Gospel.

There now only remains to say a few words about the Last Gospel, which is generally that of St. John: "*In principio erat Verbum*—In the beginning was the Word," which forms the proper Gospel of the third Mass for Christmas day. From the thirteenth century priests have recited it out of piety when beginning their thanksgiving; they used to say it aloud to satisfy the devotion of the people. This Gospel has always been regarded by the faithful as an object of very special veneration. Its mysterious verses used to be read over the newly baptized; and they are still read in country places during a thunderstorm. The faithful were so anxious to have the first page of St. John said after the Holy Sacrifice that certain Foundation Masses expressly mention its public recitation among the conditions to be fulfilled. It is once more the Pope, St. Pius V., who is responsible for making its recitation both obligatory and uniform. We kneel at the words, "*Et Verbum caro factum est*—And the Word was made flesh," to worship the Word in His ineffable abasement in becoming Man.

Initium Sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem.	The commencement of the holy Gospel according to St. John.
R. Gloria tibi, Domine.	*R.* Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt : et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est : in ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum ; et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes. Hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non erat ille lux, sed ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine. Erat lux vera, quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light; that all men might believe through him. He was not the Light; but was to bear witness of the Light. That was the true Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.

In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est, et mundus eum non cognovit. In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt. Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri, his, qui credunt in nomine ejus : qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt. Et VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST, et habitavit in nobis; et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiæ et veritatis.

He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to be made the sons of God; to them that believe in His Name; who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt amongst us; and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

R. Deo gratias.

R. Thanks be to God.

Sometimes it happens that at the end of Mass the priest recites some other Gospel than that of St. John. This is the case when two Masses being in concurrence, the more solemn one, which has prevailed over the more simple, borrows, nevertheless, the Gospel of the latter and adopts it for its final reading.

At the end of the Last Gospel is answered *Deo Gratias* ("Thanks be to God"). A feeling of profound gratitude to God is the sentiment that ought to animate our souls at taking leave of such august mysteries.

How magnificent a Liturgy is this, which detaches us from earth and brings us so close to Heaven and the Holy of Holies![1]

"Do this for a Commemoration of Me"

(St. Luke xxii. 19).

[1] *Low Mass* being finished, the priest recites certain prayers ordered by Leo XIII. and Pius X. It must be observed that they should *immediately* follow the Last Gospel; further distribution of Holy Communion, and all other prayers or devotions must be put off till after. (Sacred Congregation of Rites, November 23, 1887.) These prayers may be said in the vulgar tongue (*cf.* Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. xiii., p. 705).

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